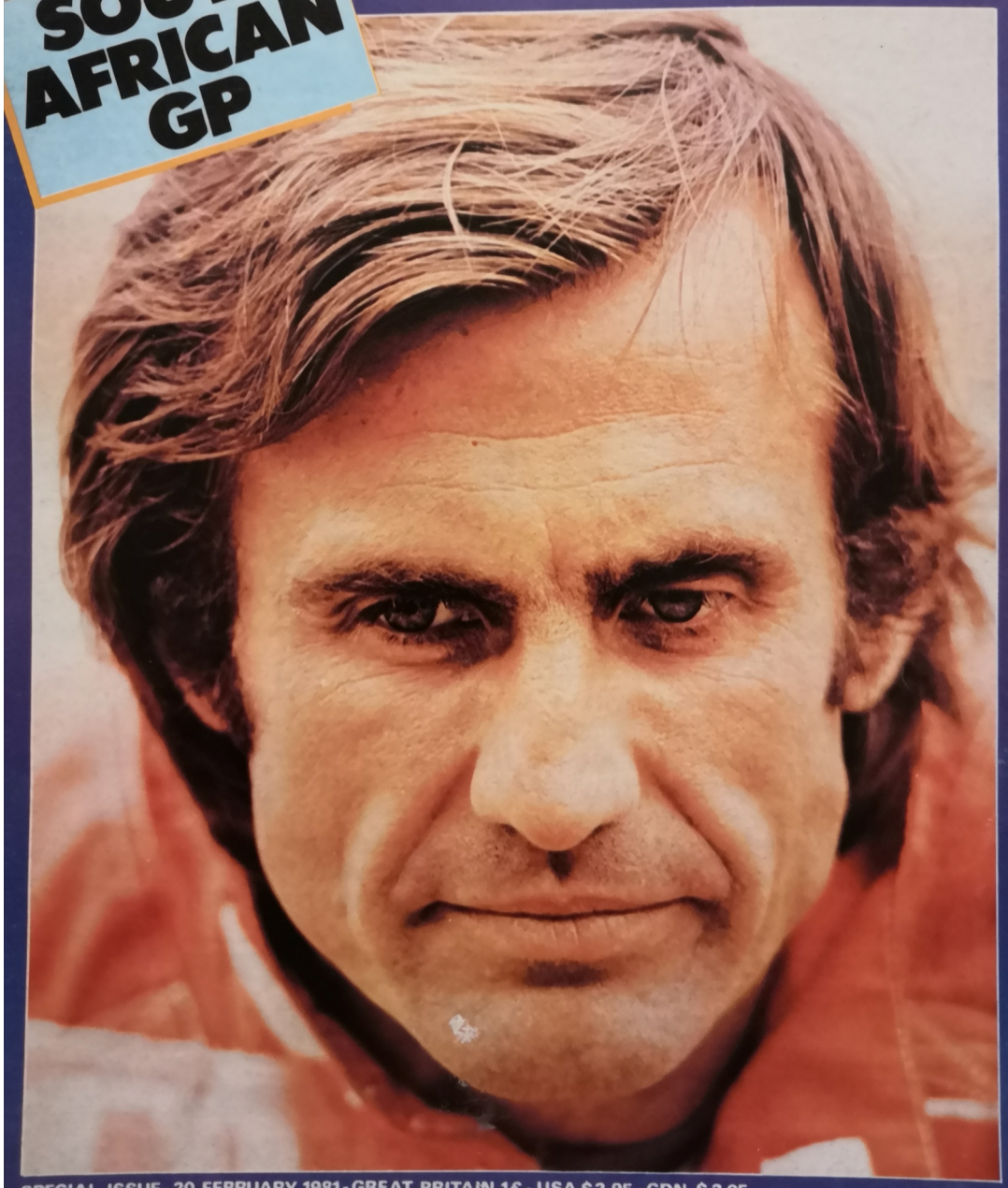
Grand·Prix

international

SOUTH AFRICAN GP



SPECIAL ISSUE - 20. FEBRUARY 1981 - GREAT BRITAIN 1£ - USA $2,95 - CDN $2,95

CHAMPION'S TRACK RECORD.

Champion Racing supremo, John Glover, discusses a point with Frank Williams and Patrick Head.

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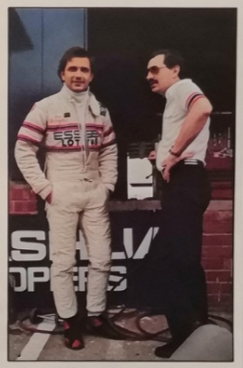

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Grand Prix international

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The Formula One magazine is published 10 days after each Grand Prix.

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The paddock in Kyalami

THE LAST McLAREN

At Long Beach on March 15, the name of McLaren will not appear on the grid. Instead, the two cars entered by the company headed by Teddy Mayer will be known as "Marlboros," in honour of the sponsor who has supported the team since 1974.

The name "McLaren" will not however be allowed to disappear altogether, for Mayer's interests have been merged with those of former F2 entrant Ron Dennis as "McLaren International." The company, shortly to move into a new factory in Woking, is already hard at work on the exciting carbon-fibre chassis Marlboro MP4 for Long Beach. The team's number one driver John Watson has already completed a satisfactory shake-down test of various MP4 suspension and other components at Silverstone.

"M" in the car's designation stands for the McLaren part of the operation, while "P4" represents Dennis's Project Four F2 and F3 operation. Although an official announcement is still awaited from Marlboro, the team's drivers this year will be the same as at Kyalami, with John Watson leading and ex-Project Four F2 driver Andrea de Cesaris as number 2.

● The Brazilian GP, scheduled for the bumpy Jacarepagua circuit in Rio de Janeiro on March 29, still does not have the essential sponsor. Bernie Ecclestone of FOCA is so determined to secure support for the event, however, that he remained in Brazil while his Brabham team was racing at Kyalami.

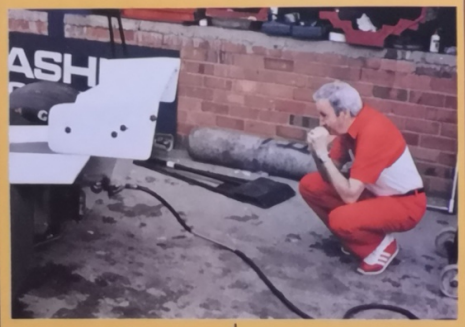
● The Argentine GP, twice postponed already, now seems likely to take place two weeks after Brazil, on April 12, to permit the two neighbouring countries to share transportation costs for the team and cars. The Buenos Aires circuit is booked on that date by a little-known club in opposition to the AC Argentino, and it is clear that there are some local political problems to be settled beforehand. Nevertheless, Argentine colleagues tell us that the race will go ahead regardless of these and any other difficulties.

MAYER TAKES ON THE RÉGIE

The argument continues between McLaren boss Teddy Mayer and the Renault team, whom Mayer has accused of "poaching" his promising driver Alain Prost.

While a happy Prost is already settling in during test sessions with the turbo-Renault, a somewhat less jubilant Mayer is calling in the lawyers to settle the issue.

Mayer says that he has been offered a financial settlement by Renault, "just about enough", he says, "to buy a nice meal for me and my sponsors in a good restaurant." He feels that his team effectively invested far more than that in Prost's first F1 season, and he is looking for appropriate compensation.



NEW DATES

Dates for the next three Grand Prix races are still provisional pending sponsorship negotiations. Although there is widespread optimism that the FISA/-FOCA dispute will soon be over, there is still a possibility that last-minute calendar changes may be necessary.

As we went to press, however, it looks as though March and April are going to be tough for F1 mechanics, with three races to be fitted into six weeks, not to mention the travel arrangements required to take the cars to three different countries.

● Long Beach will take place on March 15. Organiser Chris Pook expects to have a "one hundred per cent turn out," and all teams are now working on skirtless cars in accordance with the Maranello agreement.

AVON ENTERS THE SCENE

Announced in London at the end of January was the news that Avon tyres of Melksham in Wiltshire would be making racing tyres this year, effectively stepping into the gap left by the withdrawal of Goodyear.

Unlike Goodyear and the other tyre companies which have supplied F1 racing since the war, however, Avon tyres will be sold — not given — to the teams. A price of 500 pounds per set has provisionally been mentioned, which will make a significant increase in costs.

Avon had planned to re-enter racing in 1982 (They last supplied F1 covers in 1960), and the programme has been accelerated deliberately in order to accomodate former Goodyear F1 users. At the announcement, however, there were no production tyres to be seen, while plans to test pre-production tyres were being kept unusually secret.

An agreement has been reached by Avon for its racing tyres to be sold and serviced through IRTS (International Race Tire Services), the British company set up seven years ago by ex-Firestone man Jean Mosnier and Bernard Ecclestone to service Goodyear's "customer" racing tyres. A number of ex-Goodyear personnel have been engaged to look after the expanded business.

Although strong denials were issued at the announcement that IRTS had any connection with the tyres to be used for the South African GP, there was a small party of IRTS engineers in South Africa to look after the standard-issue tyres being used by all the teams.

These tyres were Goodyear products left over from last year's British national Aurora F1 championship. They proved remarkably competitive with last year's non-turbo times at Kyalami, which means that Goodyear goes out of F1 racing on a good note.

WHY DIDN'T THEY COME ?

From the comfort of their offices in Paris, the French journalists who so pointedly stayed away from the South African GP made some questionable assumptions. The most popular was that the absence of three or four teams (including the two French ones !) was the cause of the smallest crowd ever seen at the race, normally the Republic's best-attended sporting event of the year.

Apart from GPI's Michel-Alain Konig (Publishing Director of our English language edition), only journalist Didier Braillon *(Auto-HEBDO)* and photographer Thierry Bovy (DPPI) had come from France. Like us, they realised that one important factor which must have played its part in deterring the South African public was the weather. Heavy rain had been falling almost continually for a month before the race, as a result of which the many thousands of fans who normally spend the weekend at Kyalami with their tents and barbecues stayed at home in front of their TV sets.

An even more powerful deterrent, however, may have been the municipal ban on alcoholic refreshments being brought into the circuit. Although it is an old law, for some reason the police decided to enforce it strictly : id did nothing to lift the atmosphere of a paddock where even the normal shorts and sunhats had been replaced with umbrellas and waterproofs.

Of one thing there was no doubt. New circuit owner Bobby Hartslief, who had boldly gone ahead with the promotion of the race despite all the difficulties facing him, announced an attendance well down on expectations. "We needed 50,000 paying spectators to break even," he confessed, "and we didn't get them — not this time."

AJ, MINE HOST !

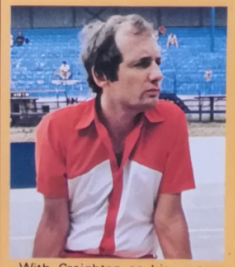
Beer drinking is now firmly established as the national hobby of Australia, so world champion Alan Jones has moved in on the act. Shortly before he left his home near Melbourne in January, he bought a pub !

"It's only six kilometres from my farm," he says, "on a road which is well used by tourists going to the seaside or to the mountains for skiing. It's just a bit of fun for me, and I'm already planning some major alterations to make the place more attractive."

PROJECT PIG

Most racing enthusiasts will know Ron Dennis, one of the directors of the newly reorganised McLaren International team, as a successful past entrant of F2 and F3 cars. Very few of them, however, will know that Ron has an entirely separate career as a pig farmer in Brazil.

Ron's main partner at Project Four, the Woking-based company which until this year has maintained his racing cars, is Creighton Browne, a racing enthusiast who has competed in the cut and thrust of the British Clubman's Formula. Creighton's most important claim to fame, however, is as Britain's most successful pig breeder, a talent which he has been exporting to Brazil for several years.



With Creighton as his partner in the racing business, figured Ron Dennis, why not join him in pigs ? « *We have a lovely property together near Porto Alegre, in Rio Grande do Sul* », says Ron. « *Creighton spends a lot of his time in Brazil these days because he's using his expertise to set up similar operations for Brazilians* ».

It sounds like a delightful place to spend a holiday. Ron, though, is still waiting to find out. « *Racing keeps me so busy* » he says, « *that I haven't yet found the time to visit the place ...* ».

BMW : NOT YET

When the British teams announced that they would honour the FOCA contract to go to South Africa, the Brabham team let it be known that they would be taking along their BT49 *muleta* chassis complete with its 1.5-litre turbocharged 4-cylinder BMW engine.

The BMW had already been tested in the Brabham by Nelson Piquet at Ricard, where its top speed had raised a few eyebrows, but BMW Competitions boss, Dieter Stappert, insisted that it was far from reliable yet. Nevertheless, it would have been extremely interesting to see it race at the 6000 ft altitude of Kyalami which favoured the turbo-Renaults so decisively last year. Whether the promise of the BMW turbo was a publicity stunt or not, it was a disappointment for the local fans not to have at least one contrasting engine note in the field.

It is most unlikely now that the BMW turbo will race until mid season at the earliest, although the factory has released performance figures of 557 bhp at 9,500 rpm using a boost pressure from the single KKK turbocharger of 2.8 atmospheres.

Perhaps the most significant announcement from BMW is that the engine will be made available in due course to any team which has the 100,000 DM (23,500 pounds) to pay for it. « *Bernie Ecclestone insisted that a turbo engine should be sold to anyone who wanted it* », says Stappert. If turbos are to take over from the Cosworth, it seems that BMW is prepared to fill the gap.

Dear Commendatore,

We were all really sorry that you weren't able to be with us at Kyalami. It wasn't just the pressmen like us who missed you, either. There are so many racing fans, right around the world, to whom you mean so much. You have always enjoyed the passionate heartfelt admiration of us all, spectators and professionals alike.

Yes, we really missed having you with us this time, because we are returning from South Africa with some memorable tales to tell, despite the efforts of some bluenosed characters whom we don't propose to mention in this card. What we saw taking place at Kyalami was a truly *grand* Grand Prix, with all your old friends taking part. We had the Guv'nor from Lotus, Uncle Ken, little Bernie's Brabhams, Frank Williams and the McLaren men.

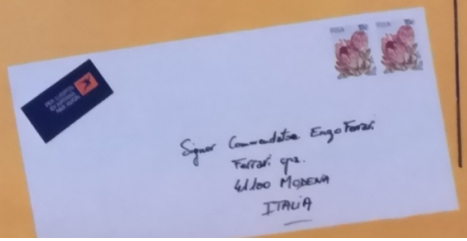
Emerson was there with his boys from Brazil (he's retired from driving, you know), there were the Arrows, cars from ATS, Ensign and Theodore : why, even March brought along two cars after four years away.

Perhaps there was a tinge of sadness, maybe even bitterness, among the faithful gathered together on Saturday afternoon. But they were delighted with the courage and initiative which the organisers and competitors had shown in forgetting grubby politics, at least for a few happy days, in order to concentrate for once on some genuine racing. It was everything that a Grand Prix should be, thrilling all those racing fans, *your* fans, Mr Ferrari.

February 7th 1981 will go down in the books as the day when a great victory was won by the men of decision, bold men with worthy aims. We toast their victory and congratulate all those who took part, the teams, the drivers, the mechanics, the organisers, and — yes — the spectators who didn't lose faith in the sport's ability to survive all setbacks.

Nevertheless, dear Commendatore, there was something lacking and we could not help but feel a bit sad. If only you had been there !

Yes indeed, we really missed you....



The paddock in Kyalami

KYALAMI ON TV

It wasn't until comparatively late that the BBC decided to televise the South African GP. Then, thanks to the cancellation of a planned skiing broadcast, race fans in Britain got a bonus of half an hour's additional race time.

In a draughty booth high above the main grandstand, commentators Murray Walker and James Hunt had a tough time keeping up with the changing fortunes of the race as car after car came into the pits. Their job was not made any easier by the last-minute decision of several drivers to change on to slick tyres, because once the transmission has begun the commentators have to watch what's happening on their TV monitor screens, not the track.

Taking over at Kyalami as the BBC's motor racing producer was Ricky Tilling. His predecessor Jonathan Martin has been promoted to be Head of Sport at BBC television, a position to which he takes unbounded enthusiasm for motorsport in general and Grand Prix racing in particular.

The Toleman team has concluded a long-term sponsorship agreement with Candy, the Italian domestic appliance manufacturer which supported Ken Tyrrell's team in 1979 and 1980. Toleman's number two driver is expected to be Derek Warwick, the 26 year old from Hampshire who was Henton's running mate in F2 last year.

A MESSAGE FROM THE RAC

In a bid to marshal public opinion against the warring factions within FISA and FOCA, the RAC Motor Sports Association Ltd has circulated copies of the recent correspondence between the legal representatives of FOCA and the solicitors representing the RAC MSA and its Managing Director, Mr Basil Tye, who is also Britain's FISA representative.

It is clear from the correspondence that not even the British legal profession is capable of bringing the conflict to an early conclusion. Mr Tye also complains that the struggle is now damaging the interests of British competition licence holders.

The RAC MSA suggests that FOCA, as a first conciliatory step, should apply to have the legal injunctions placed against FISA lifted. FISA President Balestre has already stated that he cannot consider the so-called Maranello agreement reached by all the F1 constructors until the injunctions have been cancelled.

There is criticism also for FISA from the governing body of British motorsport. "We strongly support FOCA in their claim that the South African GP should count in the 1981 championship," says the statement, adding that "it should be brought home to M. Balestre that unless greater heed is paid to (FOCA's) legitimate interests, the whole sport will be destroyed."

THE LOYALISTS WHO STAYED BEHIND

While the so-called "loyalist" constructors (*ie* those teams which continue to stay in line with FISA) had decided to boycott what they regarded as a "free formula" non-championship race at Kyalami, they took advantage of the unplanned extension in the off-season in order to continue the sorting-out of their cars in readiness for the 1981 campaign.

In the last edition of GPI we carried photos of the latest "B" version of the Renault RE20, together with news of the virtually all-new Alfa Romeo 179C. In this issue, we have further details of the work being carried out by the Latin F1 constructors.

In mid-January, Talbot invited the press to attend the presentation, at Ricard, of its new JS17, which is of course the new born baby from Guy Ligier's workshops at Vichy in central France. Powered by the super-sounding Matra V12 engine, this newest of new cars has already set some record-breaking times at Ricard. For the time being, the sole driver has been Jacques Laffite: his team-mate Jean-Pierre Jabouille continues to make a difficult recovery from his Montreal leg injuries.

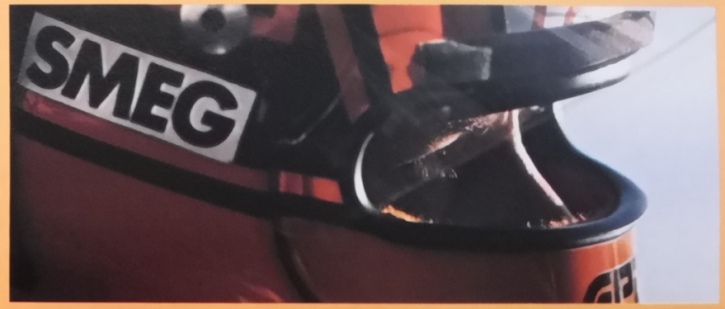
Laffite is already bubbling with enthusiasm, for he had expected the V12-engined car to be little more than a stop-gap pending the appearance of the Matra turbo engine. In fact, the JS17 is already showing that it is far more than a stand-in, for Laffite is convinced that it is going to be a front-runner very soon.

Meanwhile, the Ferrari team is continuing its joint tests with the 126C V6-engined car in both turbocharged and «Comprex» guise. The Comprex system, patented and developed by Braun Boveri et Cie in Switzerland, uses a rotor driven from the engine by a toothed belt. Vanes inside the rotor utilise the exhaust gases to force air into the engine before returning them to the atmosphere. By far the most important advantage of this system over the turbo in a racing application is its complete absence of the familiar throttle lag. There is a problem, however, with high temperatures transmitted to the incoming charge from the exhaust gases, and this is presently being studied by the Ferrari engineers.

Finally, Enzo Osella's latest chassis, the A2/B, has appeared in the hands of Italian driver Beppe Gabbiani and Argentine newcomer Miguel-Angel Guerra. Based on the new car which first appeared at the Italian GP, this latest version has been considerably altered, especially in the aerodynamics, which have benefited from work done in the Fiat-owned wind tunnel near Osella's headquarters in Turin.

TOLEMAN HOPES FOR LONG BEACH

Toleman MD Alex Hawkridge is so pleased with the progress being made with his turbocharged British F1 car that he is making Long Beach on March 15 a provisional target for the Witney-based team's F1 début. "The car looks good," says Alex, "and our designer Rory Byrne is working flat out to get it ready." Number one Toleman driver Brian Henton reports after another test session with the F2-chassis laboratory Toleman that it is much more driveable and that the Hart engine ran several dozen laps of Goodwood without any problems at all.



"TWO LAPS WHICH LIFTED OUR TEAM"

The first 26 laps at Kyalami were led by Piquet and the last 49 by Reutemann : two laps in between were the property of John Watson, whose overweight McLaren M29 proved surprisingly competitive. Here the experienced Ulsterman looks back on the significance of what was destined to be a brief moment of glory.

Being in the lead of a Grand Prix — even for only two laps — doesn't do any harm at all to the morale of a driver or his team when you've been away from the front for as long as the Marlboro-McLaren team and I have. At Kyalami we added a fifth place finish to our two laps of glory, so there is no question at all that it was a worthwhile trip for us. I certainly sensed a "lift" among our boys in the paddock afterwards, and no doubt the sponsor will be feeling equally reassured.

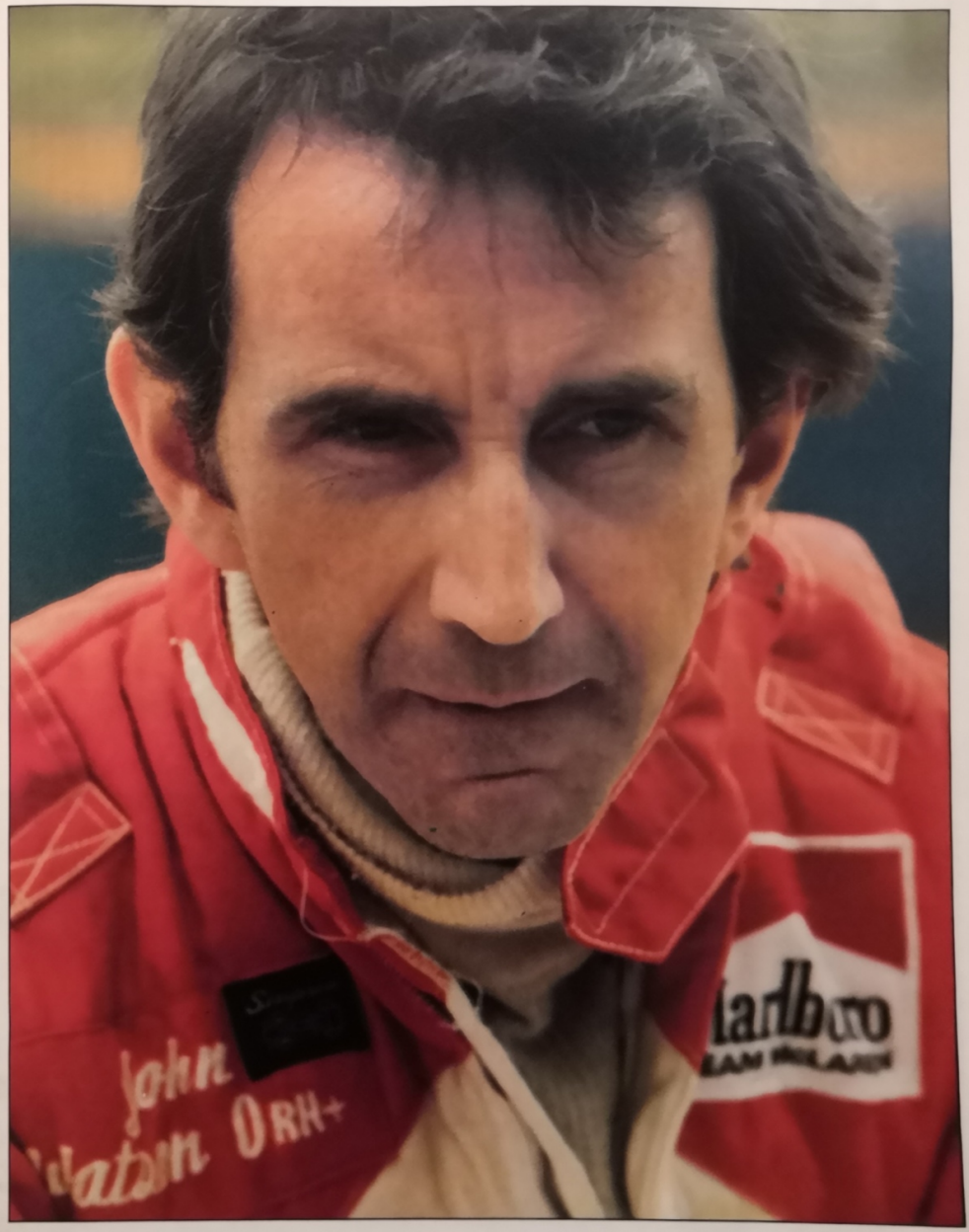
The only word which I can think of to describe the atmosphere at Kyalami is "flaccid," which I think means that I didn't feel excited when practice started. It was a great pity that the French and Italian teams stayed away, because the South Africans had made a big effort to attract all the big names. Even their poster had a Renault turbo on it!

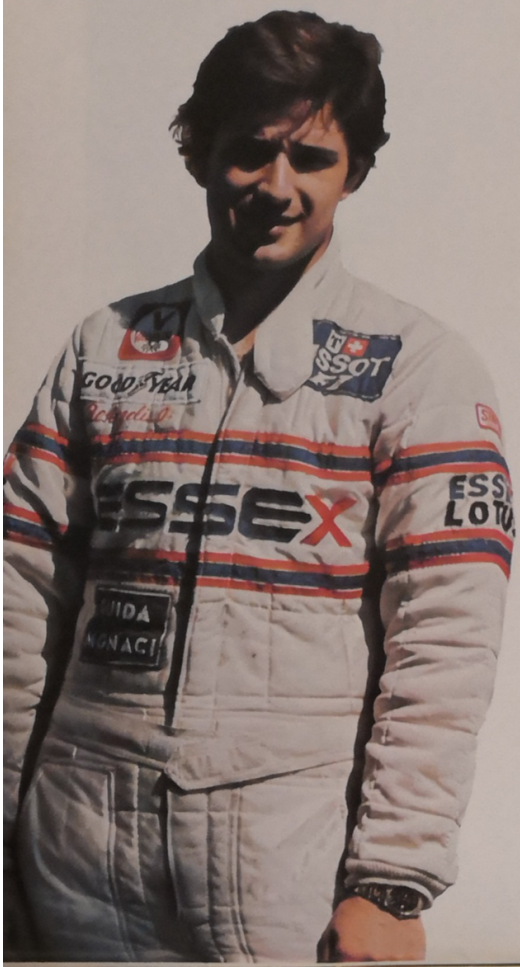
While the rain may have kept the spectators away from the turnstiles, it had a paradoxically good effect on the quality of the race itself. Very few of us will admit to enjoying racing in the rain, but provided the commentator has a good lap charter in order to keep him up to date with positions I reckon it adds to the enjoyment of the paying public. They get to see a bit of overtaking, and then there are the pit stops which add to the fun. I'm told that TV mikeman Murray Walker had his lap chart working properly and that the BBC gave viewers at home a nice long transmission.

Kyalami was the last race for our M29 McLaren chassis before the new carbon-fibre MP4 makes its appearance at Long Beach. The old girl is getting a bit long in the tooth these days, and she didn't really feel as good at Kyalami as she did towards the end of last year. I was disappointed but not really surprised to read that my car weighed in more than fifty kilos heavier at post-race scrutineering than Rosberg's Fittipaldi, with which I had been battling for quite a long time in the race. That's a lot of ballast to be carrying around with you, especially when you're at 6000 feet altitude and the car feels pretty sluggish anyway. Furthermore, the car didn't work at all well on the 13 inch Goodyears which we had been given to race, so you can imagine that I was cheering inside my hardhat when I took over the lead.

OK, it was an artificial situation with the guys who had gambled on slicks all ready to take over when the rest of us stopped for fresh rubber, and most of those who had started on wets like me already having made their stops. The crew and I had discussed pit stops beforehand, of course, and the idea was that I should come in when they signalled me that I was losing time on the people who had switched to dries. Although I felt that I was already starting a "downer," it would have been terrible if I had confused them by coming in before my signal went out, so I obeyed orders and tried to fight off the temptation to wave at everyone watching at home on TV.

I'm looking forward to working with our new designer John Barnard, who seems to have his finger on the job of making aerodynamics work for racing cars whether they're fitted with skirts or not. We shall be starting off a new era at Long Beach, because it look as though there'll be fresh regulations and a brand new car for us to sort out. Meanwhile, I'm glad that some of us went to South Africa. It proved that some people can organise while others sit around and talk about it. And in our team we're doers, not talkers.





ELIO DE ANGELIS

AT 22 YEARS OLD, YOU ARE EVEN YOUNGER THAN SOME PAST CHAMPIONS LIKE EMERSON FITTIPALDI, NIKI LAUDA AND JODY SCHECKTER WERE WHEN THEY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF LEADING TOP GRAND PRIX TEAMS. HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BECOME THE LEADER OF TEAM LOTUS AT SUCH A YOUTHFUL AGE ?

Obviously, it is a great opportunity for me to be given the leadership of my team. Yes, I still feel young, although I think I have enough experience to do the job. At the same time, I will miss having Mario Andretti to help me, first of all as friend and secondly as a great driver. I learned so much from him, not so much from the point of view of driving as in the important tricks of the trade which he showed me.

I certainly feel old enough to lead the team. Being as young as I am can have its handicaps, though : I won't feel free to do some of the crazy things which young guys of my age are sometimes inclined to do. I know that things are a bit different when you are a team leader... you carry a big responsibility which must be respected.

WHAT ARE THE SORT OF TRICKS WHICH MARIO SHOWED YOU ?

There are lots of them, but the one I particularly remember was the advice he gave me about slipstreaming, how to stay in the « tow » from another car, and how to use it for overtaking. He was always teaching me something, and I am still learning, though now from other people.

YOU ONCE SAID THAT HAVING MONEY IS NO HELP WHEN HAVE TO SIT IN A RACING CAR AND DRIVE IT. HAVE YOU HAD ANY DIFFICULTIES IN BEING ACCEPTED BY OTHER DRIVERS AS A SERIOUS COMPETITOR BECAUSE OF YOUR FAMILY'S WEALTH ?

No, I don't think so, at least not after the first few races. Maybe there were some drivers in Formula 1 who were worried because they thought that I was in Formula 1 only as a result of having my father's money to help me. Last year I gave him back all the money that he loaned me to get into F.1. Don't forget that I had signed a contract with Tyrrell at the beginning of 1979, and when that fell through I had to go with Shadow, because that was the last place which was available to me in Formula 1. In fact I had only enough money for eight races, while the season was 17 races : you cannot imagine the sort of tricks I had to play with my sponsors to do the full season ! Not all the money came through at the right time from the sponsors that I did have, so I had to borrow from my father, and it is the last of that money which I repaid my father. I had a good salary last year with Lotus, but almost all of that money went to pay off my father.

But I don't think that drivers think much about that sort of thing. What counts is your performance on the track, where drivers get to understand each other really quickly. You can see when you have been « accepted », because then they will drive close to you. Your background doesn't make any difference to their attitude on the track.

YOUR RECORD WITH LOTUS IN 1980 SHOWS THAT YOU MADE MOST OF YOUR DRIVING MISTAKES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, WITH VERY FEW AT THE END. WAS THIS JUST A MATTER OF YOUR ABILITIES IMPROVING WITH EXPERIENCE, OR WAS IT A CONSCIOUS DECISION NOT TO TAKE SO MANY RISKS ?

Lotus started the season with a competitive car, and then, in mid-season, we went into a period when the car was really bad. When a driver hits a bad patch with his car, it is inevitable that he should try to do something to compensate for its faults, perhaps by driving too hard. That's when you make mistakes. I remember that even Mario had a big shunt at Monaco, and we shunted three monocoques around that time : if you look at the records, you will see that it coincides with a bad period in the performance of our cars. I felt then — and I still do now — that it should be possible for a good driver to « drive round » a problem in his car. But sometimes I made a bad mistake while trying to do that, for example at Monaco where I spun off stupidly, came into the pits to have my belts refastened after I had got out to manœuvre the car, and then threw away 4th place in the rain with two laps to go. That first spin was the most serious mistake which I made all year.

At the end of the year, though, I was making fewer mistakes, not only because I had got more experience but also because the car was performing much better by then, and I was driving much more safely.

WERE YOU DISAPPOINTED NOT TO HAVE WON THE BRAZILIAN G.P., WHERE YOU NEARLY CAUGHT ARNOUX ON THE LAST LAP BUT HAD TO BE CONTENT WITH 2nd PLACE ?

Of course, I was disappointed. I had some serious problems with the car,like a sticking skirt and very badly worn tyres on the left side. But I must tell you that I am convinced, now, that if I had won that race it would have been very bad for my career. At that stage, I could not have afforded to be in a position where I felt that I could win consistently. It was really close, you know... only 0,5 second between us at the finish.

ARE THERE ANY IDENTIFIABLE REASONS WHY THE LOTUS CARS WERE NOT MORE SUCCESSFUL IN 1980 THAN IN FACT THEY WERE ?

Not really. In the 1978 season, with the Lotus 79, the team went through a really good period. After that, because the team seemed to have such a big advantage, they allowed themselves to sit still because they thought they would be able to keep their advantage. They did not imagine that other teams would be able to catch up and perhaps even go ahead of them technically. In a way, you know, Lotus is more like a big manufacturer of cars than the other English teams : they have technical people who are able to come up with fantastic ideas like ground effects and skirts. But they are also capable of making mistakes In a way, they are like Ferrari, who also has success in cycles but who can be guaranteed to come back and win again, no matter how far behind they may fall. Historically, if you look at the records, you will find that both Ferrari and Lotus have often been without success for two or three years before they find the secret of winning races all over again.

THREE YEARS AGO, LIKE SEVERAL OTHER DRIVERS, YOU HAD A CONTRACT WITH FERRARI. WERE YOU EVER INFORMED WHY YOU WERE NEVER GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO RACE FOR THE SCUDERIA ?

The document I signed with Ferrari wasn't a full contract, it was just an option, and I was given the opportunity to test with Ferrari, in fact I drove their Formula 1 car on several occasions. When I look back, I think it was just a question of luck that I didn't race one of their cars. I certainly came very close, in 1978, because you may remember that there was a period during that year when Gilles Villeneuve was having rather a lot of accidents. They were getting me ready to replace him : if Gilles had one more accident, then I would have been given his place in the team.

It was at that time that I was racing in the Minardi Formula 2 team, using the Ferrari Dino V6 engine, and things were not going at all well for us. In Italy, as you know, there is always a tendency to look at the driver before anything else when a team is going through a bad period. I realised that my position was in danger, and I made a decision to leave. It was my own decision. I spoke to my father about it first, and he advised me « You can't do it », he said, « you have a contract ». but I did. I knew that I was taking a risk with my career but I felt that I had to do it, because I knew that I would be able to do well with an English team. So I drove one of the ICI Formula 2 March cars, and immediately I knew that I had done the right thing.

But I have to admit that there cannot be many 19 year old drivers who have decided to quit Ferrari. As I said, it was a matter of luck that it paid off. At the time, in fact, I lost a lot of money, because in Italy there is never any problem to find sponsorship when you are a Ferrari driver. But I felt that I needed to make progress : it is not enough to stay with a team just because their cars make a nice noise or are painted in a particular colour.

You are always alone when you make the big decisions of your life : now, fortunately, even my father agrees that what I did was right for me.

NOW THAT YOU HAVE DRIVEN THE SECRET NEW LOTUS, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ITS CHANCES IN 1981 ?

To be perfectly honest, it's not working yet. But I am hopeful that it will make a big improvement when we have done some more work.

DO YOU AGREE WITH JODY SCHECKTER AND THE FRENCH DRIVERS WHO HAVE ISSUED STATEMENTS THAT SKIRTS MAKE RACING CARS MORE DANGEROUS ?

No, not at all. I never believed that skirts make the car more dangerous, and now I am even more sure. Just look at the past, when racing cars didn't have skirts : they were very fast on the straights and flew a long way when they went off the road. Sure, cornering speeds have increased, but it is just political to blame the skirts. It has already been proved at Ricard, where the testing times without skirts are already very nearly as quick as they were with skirts a year ago. By the end of the year the skirtless cars will certainly be quicker still. Unfortunately, without skirts the cars are much less predictable, and more dangerous to drive, so it is difficult for me to accept all the things which those drivers said. As far as I am concerned, I like to go through the corners quickly. I am a *racing* driver, after all. Perhaps I feel a bit uncomfortable sometimes when I get a bit too close to the guardrail, but I like the feeling even when it scares me sometimes. That does not mean that I don't want to see more safety in the cars : there are many ways in which to improve them, for example by increasing the strength, but removing the skirts is not the way to do it.

WHO DO YOU THINK WILL BE WORLD CHAMPION AT THE END OF THIS YEAR ?

Hmmm... a very difficult question. Apart from myself ? Well, I would say Nelson Piquet. I have known him for a long time, since our days in Formula 3 together, when we had a lot of fun. He has not changed so much as a person since then, and I admire that.

M.D.

FILM OF THE RACE

The rain had been falling for so long before the race that it is surprising that as many as six of the 19 drivers spotted the break in the clouds and elected for slick tyres. Jones would have joined them if it had been possible, but his team mate Reutemann, on pole position, made his choice so late that there was no time to switch the champion's tyres to slicks. It was Piquet who took the lead, pulling out a huge advantage as his Brabham coped superbly with the sodden road. When a dry line had formed on the track, however, the pit stops started for everyone except those who had persevered with the dry weather tyres. Reutemann had nothing more to fear.

1. Braking for the first corner, Piquet already has a decisive advantage. De Angelis on slicks, battles with Lammers's yellow ATS alongside for second place.

2. Lap 4 action as Watson prepares to pass Reutemann in chase of third place man Mansell. Jones follows after his bad start.

3. A bump at Clubhouse corner between the orange Arrows of newcomer Siegfried Stohr and the Shadow of Geoff Lees sends the Italian spinning out of 11th place on his slick tyres.

4. Lap 8 finds Mansell over the kerb at Leeuwkop after a touch with Watson. Daly moves into fourth place with de Angelis still behind on slicks.

5. After a slow pit stop, Daly vainly tries to make up time in eleventh place. Behind him, with the track now drying, Cheever on slicks has just re-passed his Tyrrell team mate Désiré Wilson.

6. Now handicapped by the soft spring settings he had chosen for the wet, Piquet concentrates on preserving his second place.

7. Elio de Angelis, with a slow puncture in the left rear tyre, drives gingerly to third place, the best result for Lotus in more than one year.

PRACTICE

Practice started an hour late on the first day, Thursday, and there was unquestionably something missing in the atmosphere. Most teams restricted their running because of the shortage of tyres, but times were at least 1.5 seconds closer to those achieved by the non-turbo cars last year than even the tyre people had expected. Carlos Reutemann set fastest time on that first day, for Alan Jones was handicapped by engines which either overheated or failed to deliver enough power. Both Andrea de Cesaris (McLaren) and Désiré Wilson (Deutz-Tyrrell) went off the road, Mrs Wilson twice, and the major surprise was provided by Keke Rosberg in the much-improved Fittipaldi F8 in its latest «C» version.

The second day of practice started with Reutemann's accident in the untimed session, and the opted not to practise in the afternoon. But his pole position proved to be safe when rain drops started to fall at the very moment that Alan Jones was having a final adjustment made in readiness for an attempt on pole position time. Grid positions were thus almost entirely based on the Thursday times, with Salazar allowed to start at the back in spite of being prevented by gearbox and oil tank problems from taking part in either of the timed sessions.

RACE

Jones, on wets, made his usual excellent start, but then his Kyalami jinx struck (he's only finished the South African GP once in his career) when his gearbox refused to engage second gear. The order at the end of the first lap was Piquet two seconds ahead of de Angelis and Lammers, who collided as Lammers was going through to second place, with Lammers being forced to the pits with suspension damage after this outstandingly promising return to ATS. De Angelis was to suffer a slow puncture late in the race, which may have been caused in the incident, and very soon he was overtaken by the McLaren M29F of John Watson, whose experience and wet road ability took him from 15th place on the grid through to second place behind Piquet which became the lead, for only two laps, when the Brabham ducked into the pits for four slick tyres at the end of lap 26.

There were other outstanding performances in the wet from Derek Daly in the brand new March, which he put into fourth place for several laps ahead of Zunino's capably-handled Brabham-Weismann, and from Nigel Mansell, who held 4th place after passing his Lotus team mate de Angelis (on slicks) until running over a kerb and damaging a skirt. Newcomer Siegfried Stohr, who had got in front of his Arrows team mate Riccardo Patrese on the first lap (both were running on slicks), had a coming-together with Geoff Lees which spun him off the road. Soon afterwards, the Englishman inexplicably locked up at Crowthorne and was carried away unconscious as a result of being struck by a flying catch fence pole.

The wisdom of starting on slicks became evident at half distance as the track dried out and the pit stops began. At half distance, four of the six leading places were filled by drivers who had started on dry-weather tyres, Reutemann now leading, and this situation was maintained to the finish, for Piquet's soft wet-road spring settings made it impossible to challenge the leader, while de Angelis was in trouble with his deflating tyre.

The only place change among the first six in the second half of the race was when Rosberg (who had also started on slicks) found a way past Watson into 4th place. Zunino lost several places as the result of a serious misfire, notably to Eddie Cheever's Tyrrell. □

NOTHING BUT GLORY FOR CARLOS

A bold gamble on tyres gave Carlos Reutemann a difficult time in the early stages of the South African GP, but once the others had started to stop for slicks the race was his. Now he wonders whether this will count as his 11th championship success. Team mate Alan Jones started on wets and could have pressed Carlos, at least until he made a mistake and damaged a skirt which ultimately caused his retirement. It was a race of contrasts for the very different drivers of the Saudia-Leyland Williams team...

by Mike DOODSON

The accident which Carlos Reutemann suffered during the untimed practice session on the day before the South African GP did not look as serious as it turned out to be. There was no particular reason why he should have gone off the road, except perhaps that he'd already done a lot of laps on his one allocated set of tyres and they were beginning to lose their effectiveness. The car hit a ripple at the bumpy right-hander called Sunset, the back end stepped out, and suddenly he was heading for the catch fences, spinning, but evidently not fast enough to do himself or his Saudia-Leyland Williams any harm.

It was a long time, though, before the race marshals appeared on the scene, and during that period the quiet man from Santa Fe almost strangled. *"The catch fencing caught the external jack of my headset and twisted my helmet so far round that I couldn't move,"* he said. *"I took off my belts but I still couldn't move. It was only when I had managed to get a finger under my helmet that I could breathe again. It took about half a minute. And still there were no marshals."*

Badly shaken, he returned to the pits. The only indication of the incident on his body was a series of scratches under his neck. But he decided after a discussion with Doctor Rafael Grajales, his personal travelling physician, not to take part in the final practice session. *"I don't believe this race is going to count for points in the world championship,"* he said. *"Why should I risk my life for nothing?"*.

Dressed in shorts and a warm-up jacket, he stood in front of the pits, gaunt and even leaner than usual. Within a matter of minutes the rain started to fall in big, fat drops. For Carlos Reutemann, now, there was the consolation of seeing his pole position time, set yesterday afternoon, beyond the reach of anyone else.

The following afternoon, there was tension on the grid. Carlos had managed to fit in three warm-up laps on slicks (he used that old ploy of driving through the pits instead of joining the grid), but Frank Williams had insisted on switching the car to wets. *"It's raining, Carlos,"* he said, *"and rain means wet tyres. There's no decision."*

But, as Frank admits, there was a break in the weather. Three minutes before the parade lap was due to start, a slight wind blew, a *drying* wind, and this time Frank gave Carlos the final decision. The slicks, which had already been hurried off the grid by the mechanics, were hauled over the guardrail and fitted in a flurry of air-powered wheel wrenches which rattled with military precision. Less than half a minute later, as the mechanics were still tumbling over the guardrail, the signal was given for the cars to move off.

"I made quite a good start," said Carlos, who was nevertheless down in 4th place at the end of the first lap. *"It was tricky in those conditions, but not too difficult. Some parts of the track were drier than others, but I found them fairly quickly. It is difficult to know, though, who is on wets and who is on dries: it makes it almost impossible to race against anyone until you know, because the ones who are on wets brake later, you have to stay out of their way."*

In the Williams pit, Frank kept an anxious eye on his man. At one stage he had fallen to 8th place, but then settled into 5th. It was not until lap 30, however, that either Frank or Carlos was sure that the decision had been the right one. By then the drivers who had started on wets were in the process of making their pit stops. Race leader Nelson Piquet, whose Brabham had been very quick on wets (he had softened the suspension just before the start), stopped at the end of his 26th lap, and two laps later the number 2 Saudia-Leyland came through into the lead more than seven seconds ahead of Piquet. The Brabham's wet road settings made it less than ideal for the conditions, which were now almost completely dry. Carlos had the race in his pocket.

In the gloom of the pits afterwards, Carlos was happy but not overjoyed as he carefully rubbed his sore neck. *"I took a gamble, a big gamble,"* he said, *"and it worked for me. But I don't honestly think that it earned nine championship points for me, although Frank disagrees with me. Also, I don't have any trophy to help me to remember this victory, they took it away from me on the podium. No points, no trophy, no public. It was a strange day."*

There was a moment of banter when a journalist asked who had made the decision to start on slicks. Carlos suggested that the question would best be directed at Frank, who immediately blushed and admitted that he had disagreed with Carlos. Then the question came back to the future status of the race: championship or not?

"I am not interested in non-championship races," admitted Carlos. *"But I am professional driver. If I race, I race to win. I do not think I would have won today if the turbos had been here. No way. We have no chance against them in Argentina. Have you heard the times from Buenos Aires? Prost was running as fast without skirts as we were doing last year with skirts and with qualifying tyres.*

"That's crazy from the safety point of view: getting rid of the skirts was supposed to make the cars slower. For sure, Formula 1 has a BIG problem. What I would like to see is some of those guys in armchairs having to sit where we sit. But I can still enjoy my win, even without the points and a trophy."

Alan Jones looked disappointed but not particularly upset as he packed up his helmet and overalls after the South African GP. He had arrived in South Africa five days earlier with most of his Australian winter tan still glowing and the wicked grin which tends to flicker across his face when he's anticipating a silly question from an interviewer.

The local TV spoke to him at the airport, and the papers carried the world champion's views. *"Of course the race will count for the championship,"* he had said, *"we have contracts to prove it. Arguments? What arguments? It seems that every time there's a problem in Grand Prix racing there's some objectionable Frenchman behind it."*

That, of course, is his team's official party line, but Alan had his doubts in private, and it goes without saying that a non-finish in the South African race will make him even less inclined to campaign for the race to carry points. It had been his decision, and no one else's, to start the race on wets. The track was soaked on the warm-up laps, with big puddles in various places, and prudence alone said "wets". On the grid, however, he saw the same break in the clouds that his team mate Reutemann had spotted, and felt the same breeze. But Carlos made the decision first, and by the time his mechanics had finished with the air jacks there was literally no time for Alan to change. So he decided to make the best of a bad job and to use his wets to their best advantage while he could.

"I got my nose between Carlos and Nelson, but then I couldn't get it into second gear, and about ten cars passed me. Then I made my way back up to second place and I was the first one to stop for slicks. It was all looking fairly good because there were a lot of people ahead of me still on wets.

"Then I made the silly mistake. The incident was entirely my own fault. I was still getting used to being on the dry tyres, and I tried to pass de Cesaris: the car got on to a patch of water and off I went. I'm disgusted with myself because a person of my experience shouldn't make mistakes like that."

Stuck in the catch fence, Alan unfastened his belts to look at the damage. Only the rear wing appeared to have suffered, so he climbed back in and allowed the marshals to push-start him, as they are permitted to do when a car is stopped in a dangerous place. In the pits, a new rear wing was efficiently fitted, the belts refastened, and he rejoined.

"When I got back in the race I think I was lapping faster than anyone else on dries. But I think we must have lost one of the ceramic runners under a skirt, because the skirt started to break up and eventually it just disintegrated. The car felt so bad that I decided to stop."

Inevitably, some observers find it ironic that Jones, the arch-proponent of aerodynamic skirts, should have been forced to retire because one of the wretched devices let him down. That is a false premise. The Williams team has proved in race after race for almost two years that its engineers have a better grasp of «skirted» aerodynamics than anyone else. Skirts have been a major factor in Alan's world championship and in nine of his ten GP victories. One retirement with a malfunctioning skirt does not invalidate the logical and persuasive arguments for allowing them to remain in use for the full term of the rules.

The new champion takes a close interest in the progress of the political battles, albeit in his own basic way. He enjoys making contentious remarks about the gentlemen in Paris, but he likes to drive racing cars even more. His irritation now is not so much with the irrational behaviour of the FISA officials as with the deadlock which threatens to spoil the racing itself.

"I hear that Balestre has rejected the latest set of proposals from the constructors," he notes. *"This time I think he's digging his own grave, because it's getting to the stage where Renault and Alfa Romeo are going to say that they want to join in and go racing. Alfa very nearly came here, you know, and I hear that they'll race at Long Beach even if there's no agreement with FISA. The so-called FISA teams are getting sick to death of it all. As long as there's a reasonable proposal and a compromise in the offing, they should join in with us and get on with the racing.*

"The fact that we've had a motor race down here in South Africa is excellent, really encouraging, and while Balestre is procrastinating and postponing and dithering, FOCA has made the decision to go racing. At the end of the day, the South African GP of 1981 has now taken place. They had a reasonable crowd, at least when you consider how bad the weather has been; it was a reasonable race to look at, with lots of overtaking and pit stops; and the season has at least started. We've all got our jobs to do, and now we've started work again." □

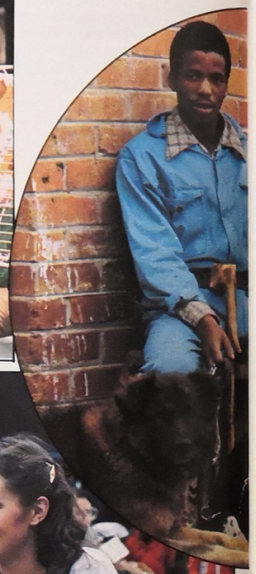
Postcard from Kyalami

Keke Rosberg relaxes with a good book during a rare moment of sunshine at the Kyalami Ranch hotel.

Concentrating on his tennis game, McLaren's newest driver Andrea de Cesaris keeps his eye on the ball.

Carlos Reutemann, the most experienced driver at Kyalami, settles down with an Argentine newspaper.

Learning to fly in California, Keke Rosberg poses for the camera of our contributor Jeff Hutchinson — who is also his flying teacher.



Steaks, anyone? Preparations in hand for a sponsor's pre-race barbecue.

Accompanied by a local lovely, Marc Surer joins the parade lap in an open sportscar.

At ten pounds each, umbrellas were a profitable line at Kyalami this year.

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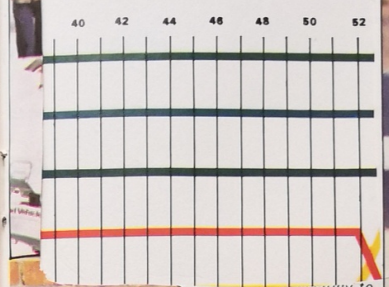
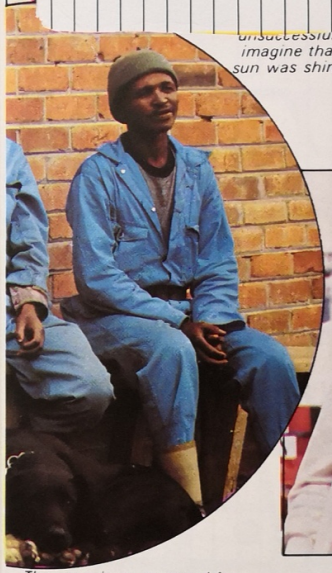
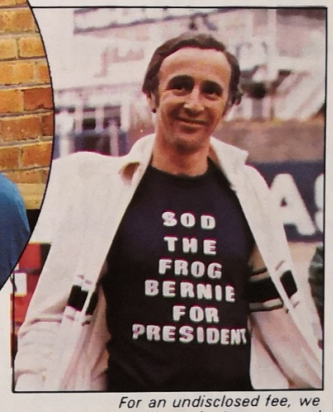


unsuccessfully to imagine that the sun was shining.

Guess who's keeping up with the news in his favourite publication?



The organisers arranged for the pits to be guarded overnight.



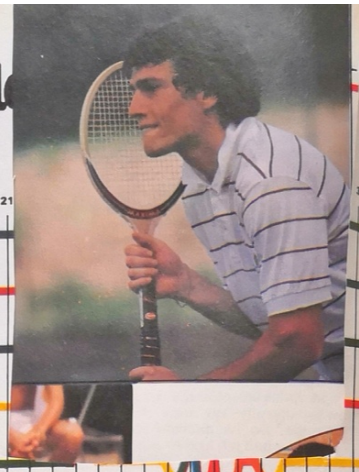
For an undisclosed fee, we will supply the name and address of this joker to a certain Frenchman's solicitors.

Getting down to business, Alan Jones is buttoned in by his mechanic Wayne Eckersley.

On race morning there was a fun race between South African ex-racing drivers at the controls of half a dozen giant tractors supplied by Tyrrell sponsor Magirus-Deutz.

Lap by lap-Giro per giro-Runde

ur par tour -Vuelta a vuelta-Ronde na ronde



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

38 40 42 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 58 60 62 64 66 68 70 72 74 76 78

5 NELSON PIQUET (BR) Brabham BT 49B	1
11 ELIO DE ANGELIS (I) Lotus 81	2
9 JAN LAMMERS (NL) ATS D4	3
2 CARLOS REUTEMANN (RA) Williams FW 07	4
20 KEKE ROSBERG (SF) Fittipaldi F8	5
12 NIGEL MANSELL (GB) Lotus 81	6
7 JOHN WATSON (GB) McLaren M29 F	7
1 ALAN JONES (AUS) Williams FW07	8
17 DEREK DALY (IRL) March 811	9
6 RICARDO ZUNINO (RA) Brabham BT 49 B	10
30 SIEGFRIED STOHR (I) Arrows A3	11
29 RICCARDO PATRESE (I) Arrows A3	12
33 GEOFF LEES (GB) Theodore TR2	13
14 MARC SURER (CH) Ensign MN 180 B	14
21 CHICO SERRA (BR) Fittipaldi F8	15
18 ELISEO SALAZAR (CHI) March 811	16
3 EDDIE CHEEVER (USA) Tyrrell 010	17
8 ANDREA DE CESARIS (I) McLaren M29 F	18
4 DESIRE WILSON (ZA) Tyrrell 010	19

Kyalami statistics

SOUTH AFRICAN GRAND PRIX

Date : 7 February 1981
Circuit length : 2.55 miles
Race distance : 77 laps, 196.40 miles
Conditions : Wet at start, then drying
Attendance : approx. 50 000 spectators

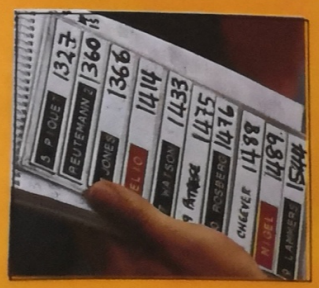
THE RECORD

(last five races)

1976 : Niki Lauda (Ferrari 312T)
1977 : Niki Lauda (Ferrari 312 T2)
1978 : Ronnie Peterson (Lotus-JPS 78)
1979 : Gilles Villeneuve (Ferrari 312 T4)
1980 : René Arnoux (Renault RE Turbo)

STARTING GRID

PIQUET Brabham BT49/B 1m12.78s	**REUTEMANN** Williams FW07/B 1m12.98s
JONES Williams FW07/B 1m13.28s	**ROSBERG** Fittipaldi F8/C 1m13.29s
DE ANGELIS Lotus 81 1m13.47s	**PATRESE** Arrows A3 1m14.07s
ZUNINO Brabham BT49/B 1m14.35s	**MANSELL** Lotus 81 1m14.38s
DE CESARIS McLaren M29/F 1m14.39s	**LAMMERS** ATS D5 1m14.85s
STOHR Arrows A3 1m14.93s	**CHEEVER** Tyrrell 010 1m14.95s
SERRA Fittipaldi F8 1m15.06s	**SURER** Ensign N180B 1m15.18s
WATSON McLaren M29/F 1m15.25s	**WILSON** Tyrrell 010 1m15.56s
DALY March 811 1m16.80s	**LEES** Theodore TR2 1m17.08s
SALAZAR March 811 no time	



OFFICIAL PRACTICE TIMES

PIQUET	1m12.94s	1m12.78s
REUTEMANN	1m12.98s	no time
JONES	1m13.78s	1m13.28s
DE ANGELIS	1m14.00s	1m13.47s
MANSELL	1m14.38s	1m14.48s
ROSBERG	1m14.45s	1m13.29s
ZUNINO	1m14.71s	1m14.35s
DE CESARIS	1m14.91s	1m14.39s
LAMMERS	1m14.93s	1m14.85s
CHEEVER	1m14.95s	1m15.32s
PATRESE	1m15.03s	1m14.07s
SERRA	1m15.06s	2m08.15s
WATSON	1m15.25s	1m15.85s
WILSON	1m15.56s	1m16.22s
SURER	1m15.63s	1m15.18s
STOHR	1m16.16s	1m14.93s
DALY	1m16.80s	no time
LEES	1m17.39s	1m17.08s
SALAZAR	no time	no time
1980 JABOUILLE	1m10.00s	
1980 ARNOUX	1m11.11s	

UNOFFICIAL PRACTICE TIMES

	1st	2 nd
PIQUET	1m13.55s	1m13.28s
ROSBERG	1m14.24s	1m13.33s
DE ANGELIS	1m14.02s	1m13.54s
JONES	1m13.67s	1m13.62s
MANSELL	1m14.29s	1m13.75s
DE CESARIS	1m15.08s	1m14.20s
PATRESE	1m14.71s	1m14.25s
CHEEVER	1m14.95s	1m14.36s
ZUNINO	1m14.88s	1m14.48s
SURER	1m15.43s	1m14.79s
WATSON	1m14.47s	1m15.03s
LAMMERS	1m15.13s	1m15.04s
DALY	1m16.75s	1m15.24s
STOHR	1m15.90s	1m15.34s
WILSON	1m15.84s	1m15.75s
REUTEMANN	1m13.51s	1m15.96s
SERRA	1m15.64s	1m16.64s
LEES	1m16.84s	1m16.89s
SALAZAR	1m19.90s	1m17.16s

THEIR FASTEST RACE LAPS

	Time	Lap n°
Reutemann	1m13.61s	72
Piquet	1m13.89s	67
Zunino	1m14.54s	74
Mansell	1m14.67s	73
de Angelis	1m14.73s	58
Rosberg	1m14.89s	55
Jones	1m15.00s	53
Patrese	1m15.19s	69
Serra	1m15.34s	64
Watson	1m15.44s	70
Surer	1m16.14s	57
Cheever	1m16.20s	60
de Cesaris	1m16.20s	51
Wilson	1m17.18s	48
Daly	1m17.84s	71

PIT STOPS AND RETIREMENTS

Lammers : collision with de Angelis 2nd lap, long pit stop to effect repairs, retired 13th lap bad handling.
Stohr : collided with Lees and spun 6th lap, retired 13th lap engine failure.
Lees : accident 12th lap, driver concussed.
Jones : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 17, stopped to change rear wing lap 20 following spin, retired 63rd lap with damaged skirt causing bad handling.
Mansell : stopped lap 17 for change to dry tyres, stopped lap 44 to fit new skirt box.
Daly : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 18.
Wilson : engine stalled at start, stopped for change to dry tyres lap 25, retired 52nd lap with wing and suspension damage following spin.
Surer : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 25, retired 59th lap with loose battery and electrical failure.
Piquet : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 27.
Watson : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 29.
De Cesaris : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 30, retired 55th lap following spin.
Salazar : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 31, stopped with gearbox problems lap 33 and retired.
Zunino : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 29.
Serra : stopped for change to dry tyres lap 29.

PROVISIONAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSIFICATION (PENDING LEGAL ACTION FOCA/FISA)

9	REUTEMANN
6	PIQUET
4	DE ANGELIS
3	ROSBERG
2	WATSON
1	PATRESE

PROVISIONAL CONSTRUCTORS' CUP CLASSIFICATION (PENDING LEGAL ACTION FOCA/FISA)

9	WILLIAMS
6	BRABHAM
4	LOTUS
3	FITTIPALDI
2	McLAREN
1	ARROWS

RESULTS

1. REUTEMANN	Williams FW 07/B	77 laps in 1h44m54.03s(112.33 mph)
2. PIQUET	Brabham BT 49/B	20.14 seconds behind
3. DE ANGELIS	Lotus 81	1m06.25 seconds behind
4. ROSBERG	Fittipaldi F8/C	one lap behind
5. WATSON	McLaren M29/F	one lap behind
6. PATRESE	Arrows A3	one lap behind
7. CHEEVER	Tyrrell 010	one lap behind
8. ZUNINO	Brabham BT49/B	two laps behind
9. SERRA	Fittipaldi F8	two laps behind
10. MANSELL	Lotus 81	three laps behind
11. DALY	March 811	three laps behind

Fastest lap : Reutemann in 1m13.61s (124.73 mph)

DESIRÉ: A GIRL IN A MAN-SIZE JOB

The first woman to take part in a GP since Lella Lombardi in 1975, Désiré Wilson returned to her «home» circuit of Kyalami by courtesy of Magirus-Deutz, the tractor makers who paid the 30,000 pound sponsorship fee demanded by Ken Tyrrell for a one-off drive. It was not a cheap venture, for the determined girl from the South African town of Brakpan had several damaging spins during practice which required a tow-in. Nevertheless, Ken Tyrrell was genuinely impressed by the very serious approach of this 27 year old housewife now settled in Kent, who confessed that almost six months away from the cockpit had taken the edge off her driving. «If only I could have two or three GPs and a few test sessions with Ken's team, I am sure that I could make a mark on Formula 1», she said. Coming through from the back of the field after stalling her engine on the grid, Désiré hauled herself into 12th place before a spin which damaged the suspension too badly for her to continue.

MARCH ARRIVES... IN FEBRUARY

As so often happens when it rains, a driver has the opportunity to show his ability despite the handicap of a slow car. Such was the case at Kyalami with Irishman Derek Daly, whose all-new number 17 March 811 suffered various practice problems (including sagging sidepods) which put a good practice time out of his reach. On race day, Daly's well-known wet road talents enabled him to outshine his team mate Salazar (number 18) as he fought through to fourth place before a pit stop for dry tyres. Had the stop been slicker, Daly might have been able to hope for a top three finishing position ahead of de Angelis, with whom he had struggled so impressively during the first dozen laps. «Don't worry», insists Daly, «the March is going to be a front-running chassis before long».

Returning to the Ensign team after a break of more than a year, Swiss driver Marc Surer pressed the much-revised (and repainted) MN180B into 6th place at Kyalami before the pit stops and a DNF with electrical failure. Cash shortages dictated that Ensign boss Mo Nunn would have to miss the race, the first GP which he has not been able to attend since his first F1 car made its debut in 1973.

'I DON'T REMEMBER A THING'-- LEES

Tempted back into F1 by Hong Kong sponsor Teddy Yip for a one-off drive in the so-called Theodore TR2 (actually one of last year's rarely-seen DN12 Shadows) Lees was less than thrilled with the car's handling during practice at Kyalami, and had two incidents in the race. The sequence here shows Geoff locking up under braking for Crowthorne corner — exactly the same place where his Shadow broke last year! — and being struck by the catch fence pole which concussed him. «All I remember is Patrese in front of me and Cheever behind me», said Geoff afterwards, «but nothing at all about the accident. I spent the night in hospital and the doctors wanted me to stay another day for observation. I could think of nothing else but going home, so I caught the next plane back to England. I don't really know why I agreed to race in South Africa: I can't wait for the F2 season to get started».

AND THE LIRE WENT ROUND AND ROUND

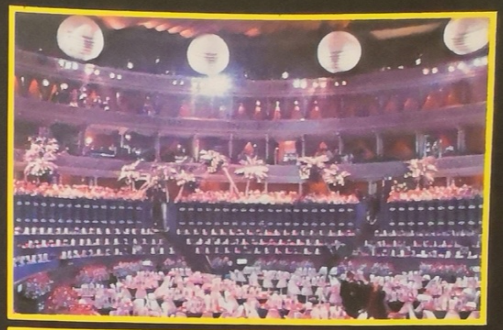
Perhaps the most fascinating political battle to take place over the winter — overshadowed of course by the FISA/FOCA power struggle — has been the scramble between three teams to secure the sponsorship money available

from Ceramiche Ragno (ceramic tiles) of Imola and Utili Beta (hand tools) of Milano. At first it seemed that March (whose car was painted for tests in Ragno orange) was the best candidate, with Ken Tyrrell's son Bob doing his best to persuade the Italians otherwise. After some discussions with Toleman which could have put Riccardo Patrese in an orange Toleman, Ragno agreed to join forces with Beta (whose house colours are also orange) to support two Italians at Arrows. Thus Arrows boss Jack Oliver achieved the almost impossible : he persuaded Patrese to rejoin a team which he had sworn to leave, and he collected the cash from both Ragno and Beta. « It was tough », admitted Oliver, « and I was forced to tell the sponsors one or two things which March had omitted to tell them about their team ... ».

AN EVENING OF ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

You would hardly call David Thieme a bad host. A better description might be Master of Ceremonies, or even Chancellor of Festivities. When eventually all the oil runs out, he could surely turn his attention to Buckingham Palace without any effort at all. When it comes to luxury, the sky's the limit as far as David Thieme is concerned.

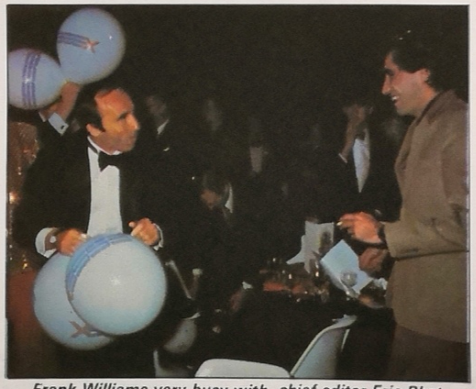
by Eric BHAT



A couple of days after Kyalami, the Monaco based oilman pulled off a major stunt. Normally, the announcement of a new Lotus Formula 1 car is a pretty memorable occasion by itself. Thieme reduced the unveiling of Lotus' latest Grand Prix contender to nothing more than a minor rôle in a far more grandiose event. Quite simply, he welcomed no fewer than 900 people as his guests, and treated every one of them like royalty. London's Royal Albert Hall had been taken over for the evening and decked from floor to ceiling in Essex colours. There's never any difficulty in flashing your wealth when you've got it, but to be able to do so with taste and courtesy is an entirely different matter.

Mike Doodson, our editor, and former Essex boy Mario.

Iran's Islamic revolution has relegated the sumptuous celebrations at Persepolis to the pages of the history books.
David Thieme, however, revived them for an evening, offering his 950 guests a London version of Aladdin's Arabian Nights. The Dom Perignon champagne flowed in torrents. The cooking was in the hands (and what care he had taken !) of Roger Vergé, one of the three great masters of French gastronomy.
After the showing of a brilliantly produced film of last year's Monaco GP and Indianapolis '500, Ray Charles sang while the dessert was served.
No racing sponsor has ever gone as far as this to make an impression. Indeed, it's not many years since the budget required to pay for a night as glorious as this would have more than covered the racing expenses of a top level Formula 1 team. But who cares about excess when you're getting pleasantly smashed ?

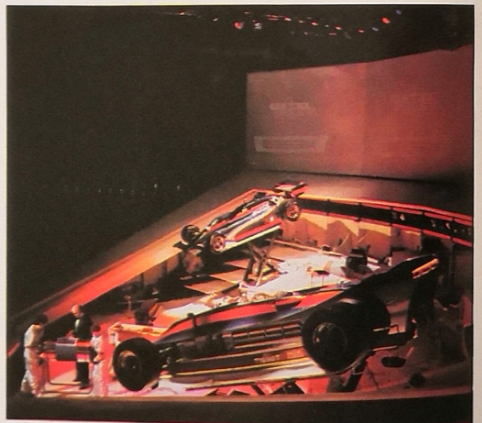


Frank Williams very busy with chief editor Eric Bhat.

Needless to say, they weren't too many John Citizens to be found at the tables. David Thieme and his right hand man François Mazet had pulled out all the stops. Naturally, the cream of Formula 1 racing was there, with a distinctly anti-FISA element of course. But the presence among all these men of steel of the Iron Lady was nevertheless a big surprise, even

James Hunt, always well escorted.

taking into account the racing career which her son Mark Thatcher is gingerly pursuing.
Let's turn now to the technical part of the evening. Alas, this is going to be a difficult task, not so much the result of an excess of Dom Pérignon as because we are still in the dark.
Rising on a platform from a cloud of dry ice was the famous Lotus 86 (or could it have been the **88** ?), no less, Colin Chapman's latest brainchild. Eventually it stood in all its glory, ten feet off the ground on an articulated arm, the very same car which previously had only been seen in fuzzy prints taken on the longest of telephoto lenses while the car was being secretly tested at Jarama. As David Thieme so delightfully christened it, here at last was the « mystery car ».
But what can we tell you about this car, the Lotus which some people insist will win the world championship ? When the dry ice fog had dispersed, it could be seen that this is a considerable step beyond the Lotus 81, and that the driving position has been moved even further forward. The side plates which form



Both Formula 1 and Indy Essex cars as « Stars of the night ».

the rear of the body are strongly reminiscent of Arrows' way-out A2, itself inspired by the Lotus 80 which in turn had a faired-in underside like the prow of a boat. It was impossible to see if the new Lotus had a similar lay-out, for strategically placed rolls of plastic made it impossible to look too closely. Equally fascinating was the existence of peculiar runners al along the lower surface of the side pods.
It remains a mystery whether the Lotus has suspension or not, or if its bodywork is articulated in such a way that it comes into contact with the road surface at high speed. Nobody can tell because nobody could see. For the time being, Chapman's secrets are safe.
Despite this paucity of technical information , there remained the delighful prospect of being able to listen to Ray Charles performing his greatest hits. That was the final surprise which David Thieme had kept under his Zorro hat for his guests. But on the technical level, Chapman stayed mum. The real star of the show was not the car constructor from Hethel but his sponsor. And he didn't disappoint anyone.

COLIN CHAPMAN WRITES

Widely respected for an experience in racing which is matched only by Ferrari's, Colin Chapman has a record which includes brilliant technical innovation and the six world championships won by his drivers. In this exclusive article, he sets out the difficulties facing the constructors who met at Maranello in January to hammer out a solution to the technical problems which have caused a division between the international motorsport federation (FISA) and a majority of the car constructors, including Chapman's own Essex-Lotus team.

The document which was handed to FISA at the end of January by representatives of all the Formula 1 constructors defines, in great detail, the way in which the constructors would recommend that Grand Prix racing be administered in future. After ten extremely hard days of work, we were able to set out precisely the terms of reference of a compromise solution under which FISA could work in future, as regards Formula 1. Hopefully, if FISA stays within our suggested framework, we will be able to see Formula 1 racing governed in a more rational manner, rather than in the way it's going at the moment.
This latest protocol, which has become known as the "Modena Agreement" in acknowledgment of the venue of our negotiations at Ferrari, is different from the last unanimous agreement reached by the constructors (at Heathrow, in June) because it is much more complete : one hundred and twenty pages, in fact, of carefully negotiated proposals. The problem which arose with the Heathrow agreement was that it required the consent of the tyre companies. When it appeared that this consent was not forthcoming, it was used as an excuse for refusal by FISA. The difference this time is that our proposals do not depend on anyone other than the FISA making a decision. The ball is firmly in the court of the federation.
In effect, we have all agreed to accept the 1981 rules and to race, starting at Long Beach on March 15, with cars that do not carry the familiar aerodynamic side skirts on condition that the rest of our proposals are accepted. The basis of the FISA rule that bans skirts is a "static" ground clearance of six centimetres, to prevent designers from bridging the gap between the ground and the coachwork of the cars by means such as skirts. But this will not prevent the generation of considerable downforce on a racing car when it's running at speed. A racing car moves up and down on its suspension : most racing cars even hit the ground from time to time, which is why they are fitted underneath with rubbing blocks. And when the car is near the ground, its underpods will work to produce downforce as previously.
In other words, the rules are written so badly that it is going to be impossible to interpret them satisfactorily. Rules which are difficult to interpret are invariably difficult to enforce. Thus they are bad rules.

If you want fair rules, which aren't ambiguous, then they must be written by professionals. One of the reasons why the conflict arose between FISA and FOCA was because the rules as written by FISA were drawn up by people who simply didn't know what they were doing. This is still evident in the rules which we have been left as a result of the dispute.
If the FISA rules makers had seriously wished to reduce cornering speeds, any qualified engineer could have told them that they should have looked at three areas: first of all the amount of downforce which the car can generate, then the effectiveness of the tyres in generating cornering force, and lastly the power of the engine, which can be converted into downforce by means of wings or aerodynamic devices and thus increase cornering power.

The best means would have been to adopt the restriction on plan area proposed in the regulations of the now abandoned World Federation of Motorsport. A reduction of the plan area of the car not reduces the designer's ability to produce download, but also totally eliminates the necessity for arbitrary rules which are impossible to define accurately or enforce fairly.
I am not convinced, however, that any case has yet been made to prove that current cornering speeds are unreasonably dangerous. In the past two or three seasons we haven't had a single accident involving driver injury which can be attributed to excessively high cornering speeds. Moreover, it is clear that not all drivers share the widely publicised views on the subject of downforce and safety which have been circulated by some of their fellows.
Preliminary tests on ground effect cars running without side skirts suggest that they will not only be more difficult but also more dangerous to drive. The cars will still have under-car aerodynamic devices to generate downforce (a principle, once revealed, cannot be uninvented) because this will offer a performance advantage. Such devices will clearly work much more effectively when the car gets close to the ground, for example under heavy braking or roll. However, pitch and roll changes will produce very inconsistent download which will make the car much more difficult to control than was the case last year.
Our own new Essex-Lotus "mystery car" complies with the 1980 rules, and can be adapted fairly easily to the 1981 regulations. A crude attempt was made to exclude it, together with the 15 months of intense and expensive research which had gone into its development, by the so-called "clarification" proposed by a minority of the constructors and the FISA Technical Committee which was issued by FISA late in December.
It is last minute changes in the rules like this which are bringing the whole process of rulemaking by FISA into disrepute, because "at a stroke" they can totally negate years of effort and hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of investment by the car builders.
We await with interest the final deliberations of the sport's governing body. One hundred per cent of us, the constructors, have got down to the task of finding common ground on which to agree. We all hope that the federation shows the same willingness to reach an intelligent compromise, and to give it a chance to work for the benefit of motorsport as a whole.

A.C.B.C.

□

MARCH ARRIVES IN FEBRUARY

After three seasons away from the Grand Prix tracks, March returned at Kyalami with a car that was clearly too new to make much impression. Derek Daly drove a good race, however, and designer Robin Herd is confident that the car will be even better when it races in the skirtless configuration for which it was designed.

by Giorgio PIOLA

Formula 2 racing has occupied most of Robin Herd's time since March quit Grand Prix racing as a works team at the end of 1976. He enjoys the atmosphere of F2, where the racing may be frantic but the social side has fewer of the pressures, political and otherwise, which permeate F1. He likes to know how his "boys," the youngsters who have graduated to Grand Prix racing, are getting along. At Kyalami he spent an enjoyable few minutes before practice started saying hello to drivers like Marc Surer and Ricardo Zunino whom he hadn't seen for a year or two.

Having March back at Kyalami enabled the three surviving members of the original board to get together. Max Mosley, who remains a director of the company, broke his day-to-day links three years ago in order to concentrate on legal work with FOCA. Alan Rees, now with Arrows, left March in 1972 to manage the then-new Shadow team. And Herd, of course, remains in charge at Bicester. Only Graham Coaker, the "C" in M-A-R-C-H, is with us no more. A qualified production engineer, Coaker was the first to leave the company, in 1971, and sadly died in 1972 as a result of complications following a comparatively minor accident while competing in a club race at Silverstone.

At the beginning, in 1969, the founders of the company freely admit that they had little more than a rented factory and a single telephone. There were vague stories (put about mainly by Mosley) of a mysterious backer: the company, in fact, was financed purely out of the partners' meagre savings and the generosity of its creditors.

March today works on a far more businesslike basis. And the return to Formula 1 — in contrast with those far-off days — is an "arm's length" operation conducted from an all-new factory in Bicester. A separate company, March Grand Prix Ltd, has been formed with Herd on a board of directors which includes sponsor-finder Guy Edwards and the partners of RAM Racing, John Macdonald and Mick Ralph. Already they have 21 people on the payroll.

Design of the car, by Alan Martens and Paul Brown, has proceeded under the supervision of Robin Herd himself. *"I must admit that it's extremely conventional,"* he says, *"because the other teams have two years' experience or more with wing cars and skirts, while we stopped skirt development in F2 at the beginning of 1980. I'm hoping that we'll be a lot closer to the opposition at Long Beach, where we shall be able to exploit some of our experience of racing without skirts."*

The team completed a vast amount of original wind tunnel testing at Southampton University without skirts *("we were sure that the FISA rules would be imposed in the end")*. The basic chassis, however, owes a lot to the Williams FW 07, three examples of which were entered by Macdonald's RAM Racing in the British Aurora series in 1980.

Nevertheless, this March is one of the most carefully built cars ever to come from Bicester, as Derek Daly — whose accident at Goodwood with the first chassis almost lost him the drive — will testify.

Returning to Formula 1, says Herd, has required a major turnaround in approach when compared to his most recent activities. *"Our F2 cars have to be right virtually out of the box,"* he says, *"because we found that any development we did with the works team was always at the expense of our own customers, who inevitably were unhappy if they saw us introducing modifications which they didn't have. "In F1, it's completely the opposite. Unless you develop the car constantly, you fall too far behind to catch up. We are prepared to spend much of our time developing this year."*

After a dizzy series of about-turns, trips to Italy, phone calls and telexes, the various sponsorships which had been juggled between the March, Arrows and Tyrrell F1 teams finally settled with March taking Daly and the Guinness stout money which Edwards had negotiated for him. His team mate is Eliseo Salazar, the Chilean driver who finished runner-up in the last Aurora and brings plenty of South American cash with him.

Daly is delighted to be back with March (he raced one of the ICI F2 Marches in 1978 with conspicuous success), and isn't at all upset with the fact that this first car is appreciably overweight. *"We have all the ingredients here for a successful season,"* he says. *"I am really happy that I decided to come to March even though they are a brand new team."* □

Oulton Park 1972 : Ronnie Peterson racing the March 720 X.

Three of the March founders : Mosley, Rees and Herd.

Daly happily returns to March for « ... a successful season ».

EXTRA

SIEGFRIED STOHR, THE RACING PSYCHOANALYST !

Nineteen seventy-six was a busy year for Siegfried Stohr. He got married, wrote his first text book and took up motor racing to celebrate his qualification as a doctor of psychology ! This year, 1981, was the one which he set as his target to get into Formula 1 racing, and nobody could have been more delighted than « Sigi » was to be on the grid at Kyalami, even if his first GP was spoiled by a spin and an engine failure.

Until two years ago, Stohr was still in practice in his home town of Rimini, counselling school children in his clinic. Although he is now concentrating on a racing career, he stays in touch with his profession by attending lectures in Bologna. « *I am not a driver who can spend ten years in F1 and then retire* », he says : « *there is more to my life than motor racing, and I want to help people when I leave the sport* ».

Like so many other youngsters, Stohr had a childhood ambition to be a driver. At the age of 14, he remembers admiring Jim Clark, but hat was just a childhood infatuation. He is a very serious person, conscious of his German ancestry (his father, long resident in Italy, was a soldier in the occupation forces during the war), and he put out of his head any idea of racing until much later in his life.

While still a student, he was an enthusiastic kart competitor, and met his Swiss wife, Madeleine, at a kart race in Switzerland. But it wasn't until he'd got his doctorate safely under his belt that he thought about racing. « *I was looking around for a motorcycle, but then I was offered a Formula Italia racing car which had belonged to Riccardo Patrese, who had raced with me in karting. I bought it and finished 2nd in the championship* ».

It was at this point that Stohr started to take his racing seriously. He even set himself a programme for a career in motorsport, and so far he has stayed on schedule : he won the F/Italia title in 1977, the Italien F3 championship in 1978, and moved into F2, albeit not very successfully, in 1979. But in 1980, he found a place in a Toleman-Hart F2 car run by the capable British-based Docking-Spitzley team, finishing 4th in his first outing and winning the European round at Enna-Pergusa.

Now 28, with a five year old daughter at home, Stohr is aware that he doesn't have much time if he is to achieve his ultimate ambition, but he says that he can wait two or three years. He has already written a second book, for private circulation only, which deals with his professional attitude to racing. « *I admired Niki Lauda's book, but I felt that it didn't say enough, so I searched deeper inside myself than he did. I sometimes do that in a race : it always helps me* ».

One thing be refuses to do is try to analyse *why* he goes racing. « *I am worried that I might find that probably racing, for me, is a system to forget how many complexes there are in my life. And I don't want to find out what those complexes are ...* ».

M.G.D.

GOODYEAR'S DOWNBEAT « GOODBYE »

According to the FISA authorities in Paris, the main reason for postponing the South African GP until a date in April, or even later, was that « there is no tyre maker who can supply the tyres needed by all the competitors ». The withdrawal of Goodyear, and the difficulty for Michelin of suddenly having to supply 28 cars instead of just four, certainly made tyres look like a problem, but in the event there were no hitches at all.

So who provided the rubber for the South African GP ? The answer is IRTS, the company which will shortly be distributing the new Avon tyres for racing. What was the origin of the tyres ? They were Goodyear covers left over from last year's Aurora series. The dimensions may have been different from the tall Goodyears which appeared in Grand Prix racing late last year (this particularly affected the Lotus and McLaren chassis), but they were more than adequate for the task in hand.

Because all the tyres were equal, competitors knew that they were starting on level terms with each other. Any differences in performance on the track would be the consequence of the ability of chassis designer or driver. As one of the IRTS men, an ex-Goodyear employee, said : « *The teams know full well that if they're not as quick as Alan Jones it may not only be because their driver doesn't have the same ability as Alan Jones but also that their car may not be as good* ».

The tyres at Kyalami were in comparatively short supply, with only three sets of slicks per car and one set of wets. Team managers « rationed » the number of laps which their drivers could do, especially in the wet, but there were sufficient slick tyres available for every driver who needed to do so (a dozen, as it turned out) to stop for a change when the weather turned for the better.

Aurora competitors last year complained about the Goodyears being much too hard, with « wooden tyres » a common cause for complaint. The Grand Prix drivers, however, managed to work the same rubber much harder, no doubt because unlike the Aurora competitors they were running skirts and, also, perhaps because they are better (and faster) drivers anyway. At one stage during dry practice, Alan Jones was concerned about tyre wear, although this didn't materialise in the race itself.

Perhaps the biggest compliment that could be paid to the Goodyear tyres on what looks like being the Akron company's farewell to F1 racing — at least for the time being — was the lap times that their « over the counter » rubber was able to achieve at Kyalami this year despite the weather. Piquet's pole time this year of 1m12.78s compares very favourably with the fastest 1980 practice time achieved by a non-turbo car (also Piquet) of 1m11.87s. And last year they were using qualifying rubber !

Asked about the difficulties which will face Avon, another ex-Goodyear man was optimistic. « *When the Avon tyres appear, they're going to have to undertake a very accelerated programme because of the Goodyear withdrawal. The tyre sizes are obviously going to be similar (to the Michelins), because size is mandatory under the FISA rules. But I think they will be very competitive before too long, because there is a lot of technical knowledge at Avon* ».

M.G.D.

A REAL LADY IN A MAN'S WORLD

Désiré Wilson paints her finger nails bright red, and usually removes her fireproof gloves when she's sitting in the pits behind the wheel of her F1 racing car. The effect is chilling, simply because it's so totally unexpected. « *Yes, I do it deliberately* », she admits, obviously because she enjoys the double-takes as mere males in the pit lane watch her gesticulating.

At Kyalami, her home circuit although it's five years since she raced there, she let the nail polish get a bit chipped, because this was the most serious race of her life. But the fact that a woman driver is in an F1 car sometimes makes one flinch. At one stage during practice at Kyalami, Ken Tyrrell plugged his intercom into her helmet, nodded to her request and turned to ask an aide to get something for Désiré. It was impossible to hear what she'd asked for, but even Ken must have thought twice when he said « it's in her handbag ».

In racing, no one makes any distinction between a driver's sex, colour or religion when they're all rushing down to the braking area for the first turn, and Désiré doesn't expect it. Unlike other lady drivers (like so many South Africans, « lady » is still a more polite word to her than « woman ») who have squeezed themselves into F1 cars in the past decade, she has come through the ranks of club drivers and emerged as a serious competitor in her own right.

As Désiré Randall, she was the hottest thing in South African Formula Ford racing, and subsequently acquitted herself with honour in European Formula Ford, a full year before she was picked up by the Brands Hatch publicity machine and saddled with the title of « Lioness of Africa ». She is married to Alan Wilson, now a director at Brands, who gave up his own racing career when his fiancée started beating him regularly !

Snatched out of Formula Ford and almost immediately into the British Formula 1 Aurora series, Des has one F1 victory to her credit, at Brands Hatch on Easter Monday 1980. One suspects, however, that she is even prouder of the two major sports car victories which she scored later alongside Alain de Cadenet in his F1-engined prototype. Her own high hopes for a third long-distance win, at Le Mans, were dashed by the apparent determination of the organisers to have her replaced in the car by François Migault, a local driver, after the timekeepers had « lost » her qualifying lap time.

At Kyalami, she was overwhelmed with the efforts of the organisers to arrange a suitable drive, which was a last-minute deal involving the Magirus-Deutz tractor company. Brabham and ATS were also in the running for the Deutz money, but Désiré chose Tyrrell, unaware that it was the most expensive of the various offers that had been made.

She compares the pressure on her to do well at Kyalami with her feelings of the Brands débâcle. « *I was able to handle it better at Kyalami* », she says, « *and to allocate my time. This race didn't worry me half as much as Brands Hatch, and the team helped too* ».

Three spins in practice, and a fourth in the race which damaged the car, don't add up to much of a GP début for anyone. Maybe she won't ever be given a similar opportunity again. But it was delightful to welcome this petite brunette on to the grid for a Grand Prix. It would be sad indeed if her driving talents were allowed to go to waste.

A.R.M.

NIGEL MANSELL WINS HIS SPURS

Twenty minutes after the South African GP had finished, the rain started all over again. Under the awning of the modest caravan which had been the « hospitality home » of Essex Team Lotus for the weekend, Nigel Mansell nursed a Coca-Cola while Mike Murphy, the team's motor-home manager, broke out the champagne to celebrate Elio de Angelis's excellent third place.

« *Hey, Mike* », said Nigel in his Brummie accent, « *I'm really glad they put you in charge of my pit signals. It was because you were urging me on for the last 20 laps that I went so quickly !* ».

Within a few minutes, the list of fastest laps arrived, and sure enough, there was Nigel's name, fourth on the list and slower only than Reutemann, Piquet and Zunino.

After a winter of uncertainty, this race — only the second GP of Nigel's career — was vitally important to his career. Although he's been assured of a place at Lotus for the year, there have been some fumbled negotiations with Jarier : Nigel's name still appears on the list of team personnel as nothing more than « test driver ». And while Colin Chapman is pleased with the articulate feedback which he gets from Nigel under test conditions, he still needed to be persuaded that this neatly-groomed 27 years old had the makings of a good race driver.

Kyalami provided that opportunity. Despite continuing problems with the type 81 chassis (de Angelis mentioned terminal understeer through the slow corners), Nigel qualified just behind his vastly more experienced team mate, on the fourth row of the grid, far and away the quickest of the three « Brits » in the race.

It was Chapman's decision to put Elio on slicks and Nigel on wets for the race. They both made good starts and were looking good as they splashed through the spray, with Nigel not hesitating to try to pass the sister Lotus. « *The conditions were not the same all round the circuit* », he recalled. « *Even when it was really wet, there were some places on the track where Elio was actually quicker than me. We soon got mixed up in a battle with John Watson : he and I touched at Leeuwkop corner and I ran wide over the kerb* ».

The incident pushed the left-side skirt of Nigel's Lotus into the « up » position, where it stayed. « *It was no fun at all with no skirt. I couldn't believe how bad the car would be, in fact I went off the road twice at Crowthorne* ».

The skirt damage was noted in the Lotus pit when Nigel made his stop for slicks, and the mechanics hurriedly prepared a new skirt box. It took almost 30 laps before it was ready, probably one of the most uncomfortable 45 minutes of Nigel's career, which has included a couple of serious accidents and a broken back.

Although the second stop dropped him well out of the reckoning, the car felt so much better that Nigel got down to some serious laps. The significance of lap times he was achieving cannot have been lost, either, on Colin Chapman. For the time being, though, Nigel was satisfied with a job well done — with help from a fan called Mike Murphy.

M.G.D.

ELISEO'S SHAKY GP DÉBUT

Sitting on the Kyalami pit wall and studying his Williams look-alike March 811, Eliseo Salazar looked distinctly pasty-faced. The reason, however, was not so much the notebook full of new car problems which plagued the new March throughout the weekend but Eliseo's own state of health. For this dark haired 24 years old from Santiago, capital city of Chile, had disobeyed strict doctor's orders in order to join the list of GP newcomers in South Africa.

Since Christmas he has been nursing a nasty case of typhus, evidently contracted from a dish of strawberries which had been washed in contaminated water. Confined to bed for almost a month, he was still in a physically weak condition at Kyalami, for not only had his doctors advised him against racing for the time being, but they had also forbidden him to take any keep-fit exercise.

Those who followed the British national Aurora AFX F1 series last year will know that a healthy Eliseo is more than just another typically charming and handsome South American : he is also a shrewd and calculating racing driver. « *I knew that if I missed the South African GP I would be one race behind everyone else* », he says. « *I can't afford to give away even one race at this stage of my career because it is so important to give the right impression* ».

He comes to the Grand Prix world from a national racing back home, first with a Mini-Cooper then with a locally-manufactured single-seater in Argentina's « Mecanica Nacional » Formula 2 division. His name briefly came to prominence early in 1979 when he won the « F2 » supporting race at the Argentine GP in Buenos Aires.

Advised by American Fred Opert (then manager of ATS), and leaning on a friendship with Nelson Piquet, Eliseo was immediately steered towards the Ralt factory, where he persuaded Ron Tauranac to sell him one of the rare RT3 wing cars for a season of British F3 racing. He turned a few heads — mainly because of his wild style — but failed to produce anything worthwhile in the way of results.

For 1980, he put together a much more ambitious programme. Capitalising on the publicity which his European trip had generated at home, and pulling a few of the strings which are available to him through his family (his father is President of the Chilean motorsport federation !), Eliseo returned to Britain with sufficient money to undertake a full season of Aurora championship racing with one of the ex-works Williams FW07 chassis run by London team manager John Macdonald. Under Macdonald's guidance, Eliseo carried off two victories, both at Thruxton, and took second place in the championship behind his Spanish team mate Emilio de Villota.

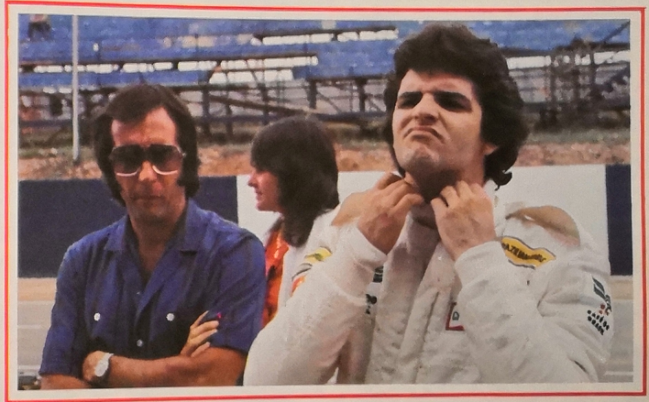
The March at Kyalami was too new and troublesome for the Chilean to record a practice time in either of the official sessions. But he was allowed to start from the back and was driving regularly when the gearbox jammed in second gear.

There is no question that Salazar has amassed the year's most comprehensive list of sponsors, all Chilean. The one whose name appears on the car is DIN, a chain of stores which sells domestic appliances. But he also has support from the Chilean divisions of Toyota, Bata shoes, Sansui hi-fi and Diners' Club, not to mention TV Chile and the government-owned Chilean Tourist Board. « *And hold your breath for Long Beach* », he warns « *that's where you'll see the Chilean press descend !* ».

A.R.M.

FITTIPALDI STEPS OUT ...

We have been tempted too many times by the nice-guy image of Emerson Fittipaldi himself to wish success on his team when it may not have deserved it. Now that Emerson has hung up his helmet and become a sponsor searcher (with results soon to be recorded), his team must stand on its own merits. With Keke Rosberg finishing the South African GP in a fighting fourth place (from fourth place on the grid), Emerson would have every reason to be happy. There was, however, a bonus in the performance of new recruit Chico Serra, who put in a brilliant drive to 9th place in his F1 début.



Emerson, now retired from the cockpit, with his protégé Chico Serra, the most promising new boy to race at Kyalami.

The new version of the Fittipaldi, now painted white, was extremely competitive in the hands of Keke Rosberg who finished fourth.

If Keke Rosberg had been the type of guy who could get out of bed in the morning, you might never have heard of him. More likely than not he would have qualified as a dentist and spent his life digging around the molars of unsuspecting patients in the frozen wastes of his native Finland.

Getting out of bed in the morning, however, is not one of his strong points. It was one morning, way back when, that probably changed his whole life and gave us the first class racing driver we know today. "I was supposed to have gone to sit an examination to enter my studies as a dentist... but I overslept and missed it," recalls Keke with some amusement. Instead, he took a job as a computer programmer and spent all his free time racing a kart with the help of his enthusiastic father.

"We used to leave home on a Friday night with the kart packed up in the back of the car and a tent on top," he remembers. "Sometimes we'd travel a thousand miles in a weekend in order to compete in a big race in Germany. My father used to help me as mechanic: we did really well considering that we only had one engine when most of the top drivers had dozens to choose from for each race.

"The thing I remember best was winning the first heat in a European championship round against guys like Hans Heyer, with several works engines finishing behind me. In the second heat my engine seized, but I'll never forget the great feeling I got from being in front."

Keke's competitive spirit is obvious, regardless of whether it's karting or driving an F1 car that he's talking about. His eyes twinkle just at the telling of those mad tales. His father, having taken most of his free time from his veterinary practice in order to help the karting, felt that his son's urge to race should be satisfied by karting. Keke had other ideas. He begged and borrowed every penny he could put together in order to race a Formula Vee car.

Again he trudged around Europe, often getting back to his job on Monday morning half asleep. But his persistence and natural talents were soon noticed, and his rise up the motor racing ladder proved rapid. American racing car importer Fred Opert had so much faith in the Finn's ability that he took him through the ranks of Formula Atlantic and Formula 2, with his own American connections eventually securing a good Can-Am drive.

The North American racing public has truly taken to this short, bouncy, blond Scandinavian who always puts 100 per cent into his driving and looks as flamboyant off the track as he does on it. He was the most interesting driver to be "imported" from abroad since Scheckter: they like him and he likes them.

While racing in the States was fun, it was Grand Prix racing that Keke really wanted. After the usual one-off drives here and there, he at last caught everyone's eye when he scored a win in the wet at Silverstone's 1979 International Trophy race driving Teddy Yip's Theodore. But he was still

→

without a regular F1 drive and returned to the States for Can-Am racing. Until James Hunt decided to quit the Wolf team (and racing) at Monaco, that is. Within a week, Wolf team manager Peter Warr had jetted across the Atlantic to press a contract into Keke's hand at a Can-Am circuit. Following the merger of the Wolf and Fittipaldi teams at the end of 1979, it is a relationship which continues today. Now, with his first full season in F1 behind him, Keke has developed into a much more mature driver than the notorious crasher which he used to be, and now fully deserves the number one status in the team which has fallen into his hands following Emerson's decision to retire from cockpit duties.

His drive in South Africa reflected that maturity. He drove a careful race on slick tyres when the race was at its wettest, then turned up the wick to come home in a fighting fourth place.

Despite the rambling house which he owns on Ibiza, and the almost obligatory apartment in Monaco, Keke remains essentially a hungry driver. Financially, he has already been well rewarded in his brief F1 career. He has recently learned to fly, drives a smart Mercedes, has an exciting American-built AC Cobra replica sports car, and is contemplating buying his own aircraft in the near future. It's not money he lacks, nor the means to spend it. His hunger is to start winning GP races and to head for the world title, which to this jaunty Finn with the unruly moustache is just a matter of time. He smokes too many of his Marlboro sponsor's product. He likes to party (and still hates to get out of bed next morning). He enjoys his jet-set life to the full, is very definitely unmarried, yet still has his feet planted firmly on the ground. In business or on the race track, there is nothing he enjoys more than driving a hard bargain. He is intelligent, thoughtful, witty and fun to be around — in German, Swedish, English or Finnish. He will, one day, make a good world champion.

Ask him.

Jeff Hutchinson

It has always been a joke about the Fittipaldi team that there are too many Chiefs and not enough Indians. Despite some winter pruning, that is still the case: two team managers (Peter Warr and Peter Macintosh), two designers (Harvey Postlethwaite and Richard Divila), and now, so help us, two Fittipaldi ex-drivers (Wilson and Emerson) to foul things up.

But Emerson insists that Warr will be the man who takes the decisions at the race track, and that's certainly the way things were at Kyalami. Looking decidedly out of place in slacks and sweater, Emerson was taking an interest in proceedings, but leaving the technical side entirely to Warr. Most of the time he didn't even wear an intercom, and the instructions which he was giving to his protégé Chico Serra were mostly shouted at him in Portuguese.

In the pits after the race, however, there was nothing to prevent Emerson sharing the well-deserved satisfaction that was due to his team for finishing both cars in excellent places, fourth and ninth. At his side, for once with a broad smile instead of the usual worry lines, was his wife Maria-Helena, who expects their third child in April. "I would have liked to carry on driving until after the Brazilian GP," confessed Emerson, "but you have to think about other things. Maria-Helena was getting more and more concerned. After the accident on the first lap at Montreal last year she actually went through a nervous breakdown. I don't regret anything in my career, but it was the right time for me to stop driving and start helping the team in other ways."

Everyone in the team was delighted for Keke Rosberg, whose efforts in the latest F8C version of the Fittipaldi chassis had brought him home in fourth place overall despite a problem with a loose engine cover. Of course, everyone knows that Keke is a great wet road driver, so maybe it was understandable in the circumstances that the man getting all the attention was Chico Serra, who had brought his older F8 through to an impeccable 9th place in his first-ever Grand Prix.

"I'm very impressed," said Peter Warr in the gushing style which tells you to switch on your tape recorder. "He's got a super, sensible approach. He'd only done 40 laps of Snetterton before this, you know, yet he was completely calm right from the beginning. His second practice day was ruined by mechanical failure, and we didn't get his car ready again for him to go out again in the final session until after the rain had started.

"As a new boy, he could so easily have cracked a real sad there, deep in the gloomy-dooms. But he didn't. And when he got up this morning it was peeing with rain! In the warm-up I told him that he could only do five laps because of the tyre wear, and before the race he was faced with the confusion of having to choose slicks or wets."

Warr goes on, about how Chico actually passed Reutemann, his calm approach, his refusal to be pressured into a mistake. "He's very sm-o-oth... and I've never known a driver of really top calibre who wasn't smooth. In the race he put together a series of lap times that were quite fantastic for their consistency considering the conditions. That means a mistake-free run — and that's very impressive."

Warr has his reservations (he always does), for he has seen lots of drivers pass through his hands, including Emerson at the time when he left Lotus to drive for McLaren. "I hope he doesn't become too deep a thinker. I hope he's got a few blind spots left for wanting to become the last of the late brakers, that kind of thing. He's not been off the road once, you know, never so much as touched a kerb, never spun once."

For his part, young Chico just looks contented. He's a good-looking young man, perhaps just a kilo or two overweight, with a shyness that contrasts wildly in comparison with the go-getter image of the modern young racing driver. At the wheel, he's magic: Brazilian kart champion and Super Vee champion, then successively British Formula Ford champion (1977), runner-up then winner ot the British F3 title (1978 and 1979) and last year to F2 for a straitened season.

As a finder of sponsors he leaves something to be desired. He spent most of the winter waiting in vain for an F1 team manager's call to the cottage in Reading which he shares with his pretty wife Pupi and a couple of unruly dogs. He had a couple of interviews with Ken Tyrrell (who wanted money) and the promise of a test drive with Lotus, which failed to materialise after the Goodyear withdrawal. If he hadn't been Brazilian (and thus uniquely eligible for the Fittipaldi drive), the most exciting thing he would have been driving this year would have been his radio-controlled Tamiya beach buggy.

Yet his old F2 team manager Ron Dennis remains one of his biggest fans despite a series of money problems which severely strained their relationship in the second part of 1980. "Chico has everything that it takes to be a great F1 driver," he says. "Especially stamina, which is something he wasn't able to exploit completely in F2. If I had the chance, he would have been one of the choices for our Marlboro team."

In these days of aerodynamics, it's recognised that no one gets anywhere in Formula 1 without a good car. That's

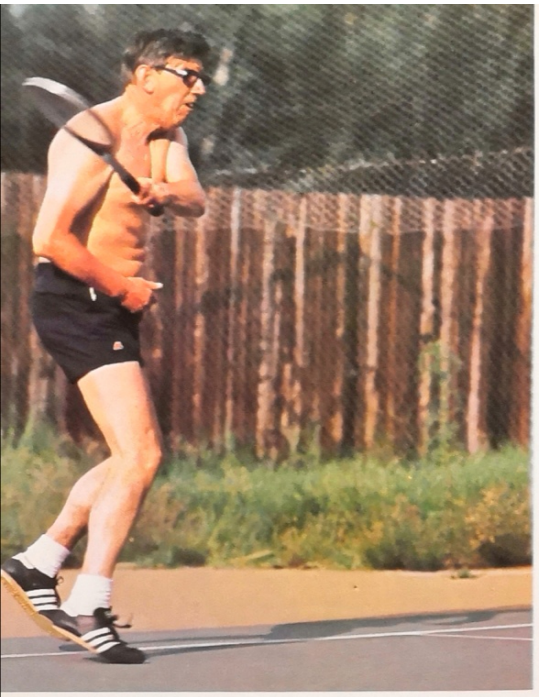
a department where the Fittipaldi team had a lot of ground to make up, and they would appear — on Kyalami form anyway — to have made it. "Because the two cars look so similar," says Warr, "I don't think it's generally known that the F8C which Keke drove is a totally new car. Virtually none of the pieces are interchangeable between them. The new car is really the development of the F8 which, given fewer accidents and less pressure than we had last year, we would have hoped to race in North America."

At that moment, a piece of paper is produced for Warr which makes him glow with pleasure. It's the official post-race scrutineering weigh-in sheet, with poor old Wattie's McLaren at the bottom on 635 kg (making his fifth place behind Rosberg all the more commendable) and, at the top, Rosberg's number 20 at 585 kg, five kilos lighter than the Weismann Brabham BT49 and 15 kilos lighter than the winning Williams.

"That," says Warr, "is the sort of direction we've been trying to head in." And, early in the season though it may be, it's the sort of positive sign which has been missing when we've tried to find something encouraging to say about Fittipaldi Automotive in the past. May it continue.

Mike DOODSON

Serra demonstrated his ability by overtaking eventual winner Reutemann before he changed to slick tyres.



TYRRELL: "WE HAVE TO IMPROVE"

Three world championships and fourteen years after he brought his team into Grand Prix racing, Ken Tyrrell starts a new season without any kind of sponsorship. Nevertheless, he retains his enthusiasm and ambition despite his many setbacks.

by Maurice Hamilton

The faded umbrella was a sign of the times. When Ken Tyrrell's contract with Candy expired last year, the washing machine manufacturer's name was carefully removed from each panel on the blue brolly but the persistent rain on race morning at Kyalami picked out the "Candy" outline. It was a graphic reminder of the changing fortunes dealt out by Grand Prix racing.

It was ironic, too, that Tyrrell should return to Kyalami, scene of former glories, with nothing on his cars but the maker's name. The 1968 South African Grand Prix had marked Ken Tyrrell's Formula 1 début with Jackie Stewart in the brand new Matra-Cosworth — and, even then, they led the race, albeit briefly. Since then, the team from Ripley in Surrey has won the race, not to mention the world championship, three times, the plain-speaking former timber merchant earning a reputation as a payer of the largest retainers in the business. Now he stands in the orderly queue outside prospective sponsors, talking, waiting, presenting, waiting, persuading — and hoping.

In the meantime, the new season beckoned and Tyrrell had to make a decision on at least one driver. According to Ken, the choice of Eddie Cheever was based on more than a hunch or a hope: "I liked the way he went about things last year. Despite all the problems with the new Osella, he always gave the impression of being keen and enthusiastic, always ready to have a go from the moment practice started. So, I decided to give him a run in our car at the end of the season.

"He took half-a-second off our best times at Silverstone and Donington with only minor adjustments to the car. Then we went back to Donington again and took another half a second off. After, that, we went to Ricard where we did a lot of work without skirts and we left there with the fastest time of all for a skirtless car.

"While we were there, I spent some time out on the circuit and I saw Laffite go off in a big way at the exit of the fast right-hander at the end of the straight. Jacques stepped out okay and I knew Eddie would be the next car on the scene. I was interested to see what his reaction to a big shunt would be. I was surprised when he lifted off before he could see any signs of the accident and, when I asked him about it afterwards, he said he could smell burning rubber. It reminded me of the time Jackie Stewart realised there had been an incident at a corner because he smelt cut grass.

"I was impressed with Eddie and the way he was able to relate to our engineers while testing the car. As far as the second seat goes, I will not be able to fill it until I know what sponsorship arrangements have been reached for the season. I would have been quite happy to take either Jean-Pierre Jarier or Derek Daly if my sponsorship had been fixed but, as far as the first seat was concerned, I felt Eddie was the better driver, particularly from the point of view of developing the car.

"Jean-Pierre is a very fast driver and I feel his overall performance last year would have been much better if he had had a better car. The same thing applies to Derek. I don't think he has sufficient experience to be able to sort a car out yet but we all know that he is a quick driver and when he sits in a good car he will be front runner."

The most notable feature of Daly's 1980 season had been the spectacular retirements. Had this tinted Tyrrell's judgement and would it affect Daly's future?

"The fact that he has had so many accidents certainly doesn't help. From the team's point of view, it makes life difficult once you start the European season. When you are racing every two weeks and you keep having accidents, then it is very difficult to keep your team competitive because they are spending most of the time repairing cars rather than developing them.

"We had 11 accidents in races last year. Two of them were the fault of the car, the other nine were driver error — not necessarily our drivers. Take Canada, for example. That was a Jones or a Piquet problem and I don't think our drivers had much choice but to run into the wreckage — but it was another two accidents nevertheless."

The incident at Montreal might have resulted in a total wipe-out for the team had Mike Thackwell not avoided the shunt by the skin of his teeth. The New Zealander's race was a short one but, as far as Ken Tyrrell is concerned, young Thackwell has made his mark.

"If circumstances permit, I would like to give him another go. I was very impressed indeed. He doesn't know anything about Formula 1 and I don't think he knows a lot about the development of the car but, let's face it, how could he? There is no doubt, however, that his natural talent is such that he is obviously a star of tomorrow.

"While we are on this subject, there is one point I would like to make. I think the business of taking on a young driver is going to be made much more difficult by the question of Prost and McLaren. When a team runs a driver like Prost, presumably on a three year contract, then it is obvious that they will have to bear with that driver while he settles in during the first year. In McLaren's case, they got through that year only to have Prost go away and drive for another team. Okay, there will be a court action, but who wants that? If a driver is going to feel free to break his contract then there is little hope for young drivers in Formula 1. It depends on what the settlement is. I would reckon that it cost McLaren half of their total expenditure to run Prost last year."

Tyrrell estimates the cost of running his two car team for the season to be in the region of 1.5 million pounds. As a result, Ken was prepared to hire his second car out at Kyalami after a determined stand against the popular and increasingly necessary habit of hire-drives.

"I am very sad that this has had to happen. In all the sponsorship deals in the past, I have never had a sponsor dictate who drove the car. But with things the way they are at the moment, I have had to keep the second car free. The choice of a second driver could affect sponsorship for the season so I will let that car go to sponsors for individual races until such time as I find backing for the season.

"It was natural to have Desiré for this race, of course, but when you look back at our record, particularly at Kyalami, it marks a big change for the team. It's a sign of our performance during the last three years and, obviously, it is much easier to get sponsorship if your performance is good. Our highest position last year was fourth — which was pathetic. So, we have to improve on that situation and it may be difficult to attract sponsors until we do. You could say that, with the exception of Williams and Brabham, the other Ford-engined teams were no better than us last year and yet most of them have sponsors. In many cases, however, they had ongoing deals so they have another year to put things right. Our contract with Candy expired at the wrong time."

In the meantime, Tyrrell, whose enthusiasm for going motor racing remains undiminished through the recent trials and tribulations — both political and financial — was ready for Kyalami come Hell or high overdraft. An agreement was reached with Deutz to give Desiré Wilson the second car and the gutsy young South African lady grasped the opportunity with her neatly manicured hands.

Desiré's enthusiasm led to one or two spins and an eyeball-to-eyeball chat with Mr Tyrrell as he made his views known in typical forthright fashion.

"I have always been impressed by her performance," said Ken. "I thought that she did an excellent job during that tyre test session before the British Grand Prix last year. Without a doubt, she is the best woman driver in a single-seater that we have seen in my time. She is probably the best ever and I think her performance here proved that.

"First time out in the car and she qualified 16th. Now you can assume that there are eight drivers not here who might have qualified further up the grid which means she still would have qualified. That's a very good effort indeed. She is not afraid to get on with the job although she had a couple of spins and went off the road during practice. I wasn't very happy with that and told her so. Then she went off again so I sat her down and spelt out a few home truths — and she promptly went out and was quicker than she had been all weekend! She agreed that she had been trying too hard and eventually she settled down and was consistent as well as fast."

Desiré was caught out by the sense of occasion at the start when she stalled on the line. It was the prelude to a hard-charging drive in the wet before a pit stop for dry tyres on lap 25 although, unfortunately, her race ended in a spin.

Eddie Cheever, meanwhile, was doing a workmanlike job after an appalling setback during the rain-soaked morning warm-up. Leaving the pits, Cheever had taken fourth gear and was checking his mirror before attempting to move onto line for Crowthorne. In an instant, the car had turned sharp left and careered across the track, ramming the concrete retaining wall head-on. The violence of the impact was as horrifying as it had been unexpected. The pedal box was crumpled beyond recognition yet Cheever had managed to pull his feet clear-although he couldn't remember how he had managed it!

Apart from a bruised left ankle, he was unharmed. His left driving boot, however, remained firmly wedged in the foot well when the wreckage was returned to the garage. Fortunately, Cheever had run both cars available to him (010 (3/5) and 010 (2)) during practice which meant the latter was not an unknown quantity when it came to starting the race. Caught out by a hasty starter who had the red lights in operation while Tyrrell number 3 was still approaching the grid, Cheever was late away as he struggled with his slicks.

"It was a good effort," commented Tyrrell after the race. "I thought he drove very well considering all the problems. The same applies to Desiré. I didn't want to risk starting her on slicks for her first Grand Prix in the wet but, once she had recovered from that stalled engine, she really gave it a go. Fantastic effort.

"One way and another, it has been an expensive weekend what with damaged skirts and the shunt. But it has been worth it. At least it was a *race*..."

For Eddie Cheever, it was more than that. He may have been classified seventh, but it was the first time he had run a Grand Prix without stopping! The back of his virgin white overalls was stained with Tyrrell blue as he hobbled around the garage looking for Brian Lisles, the team's engineer.

"Have you got a couple of minutes," he asked. "I've got lots to talk about." With that, they disappeared into their caravan parked in the paddock and set about finding ways of improving the car and putting a sponsor's name on that blue umbrella. □

KYALAMI TECHNICALITIES

FITTIPALDI

Fittipaldi-Ford F8/3
Keke Rosberg (SF)
Fittipaldi-Ford F8/2
Chico Serra (BR)
Fittipaldi-Ford

There is virtually nothing interchangeable between the new F8 "C" chassis used by Rosberg (there was a spare monocoque available had he needed it) and the 1980-spec F8 used by new F1 recruit Chico Serra. Apart from the disappearance as sponsor of Skol beer, changes since last year include new sidepods developed by Postlethwaite and Divila in the wind tunnel at London's Imperial College, a longer engine cover, revised suspension geometry front and rear and a stiffer chassis despite a "diet" which has brought weight down by 8 kg, almost to the 1980 limit enforced for this race.

Neither car proved reliable in practice (Rosberg with an engine problem and Serra with gearbox trouble), but they acquitted themselves well in the race under the eye of team owner Emerson Fittipaldi. Both drivers ran strongly, Rosberg finishing a commendable 4th after a non-stop run on slicks, while Serra was a lap behind in 9th place after a brave mistake-free race which earned comparisons with Emerson's own abilities at the same age (**24**).

MARLBORO McLAREN

McLaren-Ford M29/4
John Watson (GB)
McLaren-Ford M29/5
Andrea de Cesaris (I)
McLaren M29/2
spare

The rear suspension of the all carbon fibre chassis Marlboro MP4 designed by John Barnard has already been put through a satisfactory long distance test in England on an adapted McLaren M29, three examples of which appeared in SA (The M30 has been forgotten). There was competition on Friday for the T-car when Watson's engine blew while new recruit de Cesaris — whose own car was refusing to pick up its fuel correctly — was using it. Watson was able to pull rank ("a good thing they're virtually the same size", said McLaren International's Ron Dennis) but found the brakes unsatisfactory. The previous day an accident involving de Cesaris had forced the team to change the suspension of his car for a different specification: the Italian said it was less good, with understeer in the fast corners and unacceptably heavy steering. Both cars were set up for wet conditions on race day, which made Watson's just a bit too slow in a straight line for him to be able to resist an attack by eventual 4th man Keke Rosberg. Both cars understeered badly when the track dried out, causing de Cesaris eventually to lose control and spin off.

ESSEX LOTUS

Lotus-Ford 81/3
Elio de Angelis (I)
Lotus-Ford 81/2
Nigell Mansell (GB)
Lotus-Ford 81/1
spare

A minimum of visible changes on the familiar type 81 chassis, which has been extensively tested in skirtless guise with virtually no suspension changes. A new rear upright, similar to the one which first appeared in Canada last year, was in use. This time its geometry didn't cause drive shafts to snap. With the "secret" new Lotus now undergoing extensive testing (despite reports that it contravenes both the 1980 and 1981 rules), development on the 81 is slowing down, and de Angelis felt that the car would have been better if an effort had been made to adapt it to the standard issue 13 inch front tyres at Kyalami instead of the 15 inch tyres in general use at the end of last year. Starting on slick tyres, de Angelis survived a lap two bump with Lammers and a slow puncture to take a mature 3rd place, while Mansell (on dries) damaged a skirt on a kerb while battling with his team mate and John Watson, and was forced to do 30 laps with the left skirt stuck in the "up" position. Meanwhile the mechanics prepared a new skirt box: after a stop to fit it, he felt much more comfortable but had lost too much time to finish any higher than 10th, three laps behind.

RAGNO/BETA ARROWS

Arrows-Ford A3/03:
Riccardo Patrese (I)
Arrows-Ford A3/06:
Siegfried Stohr (I)
Arrows-Ford A3/02:
spare

Now working as the team's chief designer following the departure of Tony Southgate, Dave Wass has made some fundamental design changes to the rear suspension of the pretty A3 chassis in order to reduce the understeer about which the Arrows drivers complained last year. Other alterations to the geometry of the front suspension have also made an improvement in the steering, which required too much effort of the drivers in 1980. One noticeable aerodynamic alteration was a higher cover for the engine. After blowing an engine in his regular car, Italian newcomer Stohr was given the T-car to permit him to get on with the learning process.

Patrese reported much improved performance — "as good as a Williams, perhaps" — on the slow speed sections of the Kyalami circuit, but said that the car lacked traction on the fast corner leading to the straight, and did not have enough top speed on the straight itself. The modifications appear to work, for he also mentioned oversteer in several corners. Patrese ran throughout on slicks, but could not match the speed of Reutemann and Rosberg with similar equipment in the wet; nevertheless, he finished 6th. Stohr, also using slicks throughout, trailed his team mate in the early stages, but had a "touch" with Lees which sent him spinning. He retired with engine failure.

ENSIGN

Ensign-Ford MN 180 B/15
Marc Surer (CH)

While the Ensign team has gone through a financial rearrangement, ex-Lotus men Ralph Bellamy and Nigel Bennett remain on the design side. The chassis brought to Kyalami had been entirely re-skinned using honeycomb material and carbon-fibre, and wind tunnel tests had confirmed the effectiveness of a Brabham-type side wing profile. Marc Surer had a troubled practice, but raced confidently until a series of electrical problems sidelined him. There are expected to be two Ensigns at Long Beach.

ATS WHEELS

ATS-Ford D4/06
Jan Lammers (NL)
ATS-Ford D4/05
spare

With a new French engineer recruited from Ligier in Hervé Guilpin, and some expensive quarter-scale wind tunnel work in conjunction with aerodynamic specialists SERA in Paris, this German-backed team is beginning to look a lot less of a joke than before. The new chassis (06) turned out to be 6 kg heavier than last year's car; returned driver Lammers found himself in the older 05 on Friday following engine problems with the regular car. On the second lap of the race, while trying to take second place from de Angelis at Clubhouse corner, the curly-haired Dutchman damaged the car and spent the best part of an hour on repairs in the pits. The newest ATS is expected to be ready just before Long Beach, but it is unlikely to be taken there because of the heavy schedule (three GPs in six races) being suggested for the immediate future.

THEODORE

Theodore-Ford TR2
Geoff Lees (GB)

As a stop-gap for the all-new car being designed by ex-Arrows man Tony Southgate, Teddy Yip's team brought out the Shadow DN12 which last raced at Jarama. Geoff Lees was very unhappy with its handling, throughout the weekend: he was chasing Siegfried Stohr for twelfth place in the race when they collided. Lees continued until unaccountably slithering off the road at Crowthorne corner with all wheels locked.

PARMALAT BRABHAM

Brabham-Ford BT 49/09 :
Nelson Piquet (BR)
Brabham-Ford BT 49/07 :
Ricardo Zunino (RA)

Although Bernie Ecclestone's cars now carry "Pemex" (Mexican Petroleum) stickers in addition to the familiar Parmalat livery, it may be a long time before the team's regular number two driver, Mexican Hector Rebaque, is fully recovered from the hepatitis which kept him out of the car in South Africa. His place was taken by Ricardo Zunino, making a return to the team and showing more speed than he did in the first half of last year. While number one driver Nelson Piquet concentrated on the Hewland gearbox version of the BT49, Zunino was given the car with the California-built Weismann transmission, which he reported to be a big improvement on the early version he tried last year. The Brabham mechanics remain less than enthusiastic about the transverse American gearbox, despite its aerodynamic potential. Zunino had some transmission problems during practice on Thursday, but took 8th place in the race, the first time the Weismann has gone full GP distance. The promised turbo-BMW four-cylinder engine for Piquet did not materialise (BMW engine man Paul Rosche now says that the 1.5-litre unit is unlikely to be race ready until mid-season), leaving Piquet to set pole position with his regular Cosworth chassis. He finished 2nd in the race, handicapped after a pit stop to change to slick tyres by the high-downforce "wet" settings to wings and roll bars, etc.

MARCH

March-Ford 811/02
Derek Daly (IRL)
March-Ford 811/03
Eliseo Salazar (CHI)

After Daly had escaped unhurt from a testing accident in England which destroyed the first type 811 chassis, the March design team under the supervision of Robin Herd had proceeded with some major modifications which allow more space for the driver's feet than the first car (Daly had complained that he was unable to work the pedals properly). Herd admits that the car is extremely conventional, though as yet it is short of essential development work. Daly discovered after the Friday practice that the aerodynamic profiles on the undersides of the sidepods were tearing away from the revised chassis, and there were other problems with the very lightweight bodywork which recurred in the race. Until the pit stops, however, he was making strong progress and looking confident in the car. Salazar, suffering from hepatitis, did almost no practice at all because of gearbox and oil tank problems which were the result of his car's newness: he retired from the race with the transmission stuck in second gear.

SAUDIA LEYLAND WILLIAMS

Williams-Ford FW 07/09 :
Alan Jones (AUS)
Williams-Ford FW 07/08 :
Carlos Reutemann (RA)
Williams-Ford FW 07/010 :
Jones's spare

With designer Patrick Head remaining at the team's Didcot HQ to concentrate of a skirtless version of the existing FW07 chassis in readiness for Long Beach, Frank Williams was in charge of two of last year's cars and a brand new chassis (010). All three showed detail changes, among them oil and water radiators which have changed places on each side of the car in a bid to improve cooling. The FW07 which races at Long Beach will be very different, for Head says that the aerodynamic changes not only alter the centre of pressure but also require revisions to the weight distribution and suspension geometry. Head already has a new chassis in mind, with the intention of introducing it in May, after the three American races. *"Skirtless cars will mean even more aerodynamic research, not less,"* said Williams, whose mechanics are putting the finishing touches to a brand new quarter-scale wind tunnel next to the factory.

The most serious incident of the weekend for the Williams team was Reutemann's accident on Thursday morning, when he ran off the road while testing on full tanks and was almost strangled in the catch fencing. Having opted at the last minute for slick tyres, Reutemann went on to score one of his most accomplished victories, having established pole position despite a decision (because of his neck injury) to sit out the Friday sessions. Jones, who had been worried during dry practice about high tyre wear, started the race on wet tyres, made a poor start when second gear refused to engage, and ran off the road only two laps after a quick stop for slicks. Though he returned to the race when the damaged rear wing had been replaced, the champion later retired as a result of a damaged skirt which badly upset the car's handling.

TYRRELL

Tyrrell-Ford 010/2
Eddie Cheever (USA)
Tyrrell-Ford 010/1
Desire Wilson (ZA)
Tyrrell-Ford 010/5
Cheever's spare

Among the detail changes to the 010 chassis since 1980 is a stiffer chassis: the T-car (raced by Cheever after a race morning practice accident) also sported reinforcing arms in the side pods and Ligier-like "kick-ups" ahead of the rear wheels. Maurice Phillippe is designing a new car which is expected to race within two months. Cheever had one mild accident on Friday, but the incident on race morning was serious enough to give him a severe shaking (his shoe was trapped in the bent metal). Désiré Wilson, making her GP race début, had one engine failure and three spins during practice. Cheever opted to race on slicks and ran non-stop to a comparatively subdued 7th place, while Mrs Wilson, who was delayed at the start, ran well enough on wet tyres to overtake her male team mate: later she spun off the road and was forced to retire at her pit with suspension damage.

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